

PC GAMES NIRVANA

WORLD EXCLUSIVE REVIEW

DAIKATANA

Better than Half-Life?

DEFINITIVE REVIEWS

**MDK 2
SOULBRINGER
STARLANCER
ALLEGIANCE
EURO 2000**

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW

RED ALERT 2

**Westwood unveils the most
eagerly awaited sequel ever**

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○ **TINY COMPO**: Who is the big man behind Daikatana?

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68 SOULBRINGER Read the definitive review of Infogrames' epic RPG.



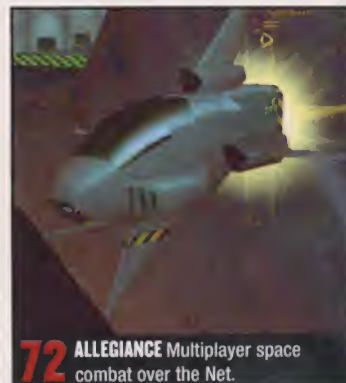
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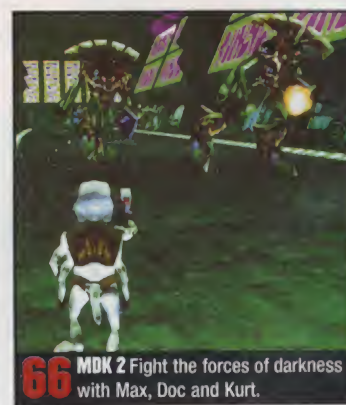
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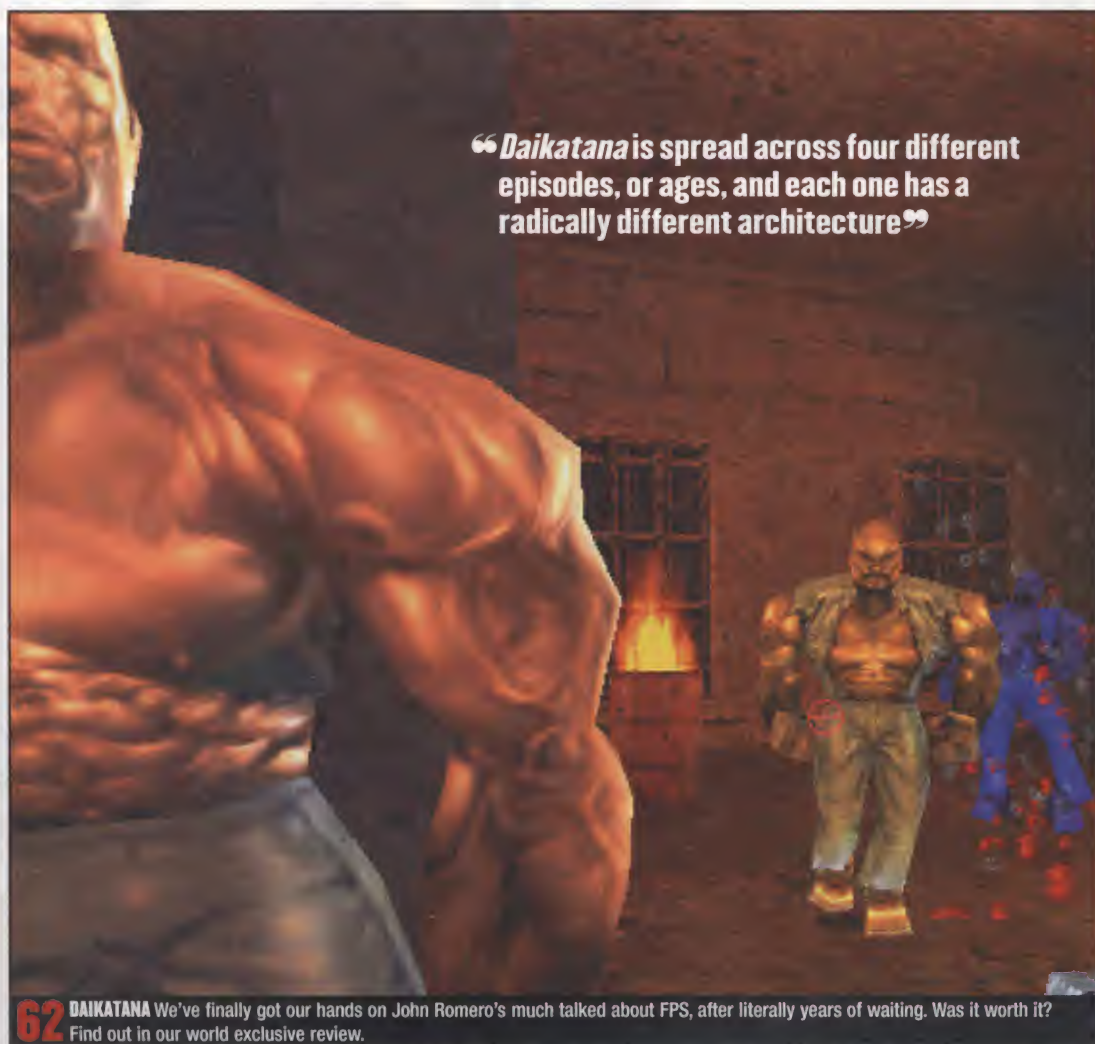
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THE WAIT IS OVER,
NOW PLAY THE
DEMO AND MAKE
UP YOUR OWN MIND

DAIKATANA

PLUS

**FORCE COMMANDER
LEMMINGS REVOLUTION**

**DOGS OF WAR
GUNSHIP!**

EURO LEAGUE FOOTBALL

AND...

ALL THE BEST

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As well as these exciting demos, we've got the finest selection of patches and utilities currently available

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WIN!

THE COMPO NO ONE FINDS Correctly answer this month's cover question and you could win some PC goodies. Send your entry on a postcard addressed to: **The Compo No One Finds (91), PC ZONE, 19 Bolsover Street, London W1P 7HJ**. The first entry with the correct answer plucked out of the hat wins a mystery prize. The editor's decision is final. Closing date Monday 3rd July 2000. The winner of our May (#89) cover compo was Mr K Hignett from Benwick-on-Tweed, who wins something from the *ZONE* prizes cupboard for sending in the correct answer (I'm going in!) to our last little teaser.

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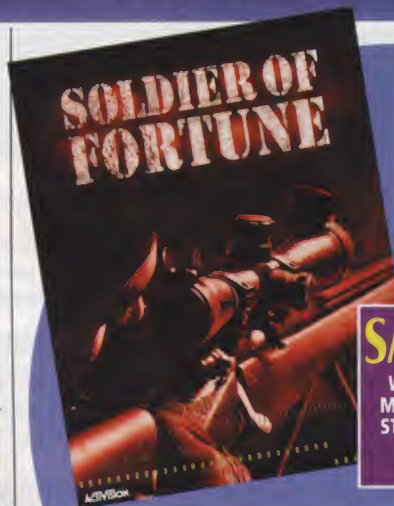
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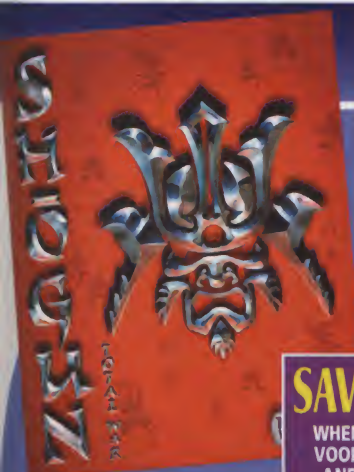
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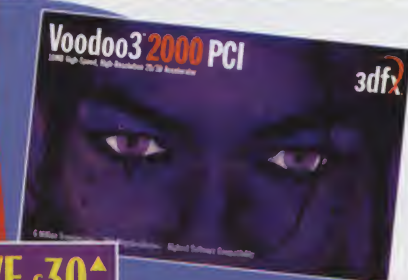
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EARTH 2150

"Slick, challenging, surprising, huge: Earth 2150 seals the coffin of the 2D RTS forever."



"The best conventional real-time strategy game available."

"Tiberian Sun has been firmly deposed."

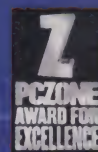
PC Gamer (May) - 91%



"Real-time strategy fans are in for an exhilarating ride."

"After Earth 2150 other developers will be forced into rethinking their code, and will have to start using innovation and forward thinking."

PC Zone: 86%



"A true modern classic that is everything Command and Conquer: Tiberian Sun should have been. It reeks quality in every conceivable area and is one of the PC's rare 'must have' games."

"Earth 2150 is one of the most visually stunning games on the PC."

"A new benchmark for the strategy genre."

PC Gameplay (May) - 9/10



"The best example yet of a traditional resource management RTS, also brilliant in multiplay mode and don't overlook the map designer."

"The level editor is undoubtedly the best to grace a game of this kind, it's nothing short of amazing."

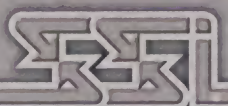
PC Strategy Games: 8/10



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Finally, a Real Time Strategy game that's really... 3D

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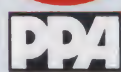
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BY WAY OF RESPONSE...



Your comments to *PC ZONE* are always welcome. Whether you're writing in to criticise or praise us or just need to get something off your chest, I want to hear it. But most importantly, I want to know what you want to see in the mag. Over the last few months I have been swamped with letters on the subject of online gaming. An increasing percentage of the *ZONE* readership are calling out for more coverage on this aspect of gaming, and we will be responding in style next month. A new extensive online section will cover everything you ever wanted, or needed, to know about online gaming but were too bored to ask. News, previews, reviews, features, we'll have the

lot, and, judging by the impressive line-up of online games at this month's E3 show in LA, you can expect this side of gaming to become part of your staple gaming diet very soon, if it's not already. The arrival of affordable high-speed connections will go a long way to making this happen. Gone will be the days of connecting to the Net with a dodgy modem and getting humiliated by every American in sight because your frame

“Gone will be the days of dodgy modems and getting humiliated by Americans because your frame rate is not up to scratch”

rate is not up to scratch. If you're not yet connected, or you don't understand what those new fangled ADSL things mean, fear not, we'll be looking at all the new high-speed connection deals on offer, testing them rigorously, and then reporting back to you with our results.

Things to look forward to in next month's Online section include an *Ultima Online 2* preview, a head-to-head battle between the *EverQuest* and *Ultima Online* expansion packs, a news report on *Sovereign*, a game we expect to change the real-time strategy genre forever, and the latest on *Neocron*, a virtual world online that looks like a futuristic version of *Kingpin* with knobs on.

This new section will be brought into the magazine in addition to all the things we already cover, so next month's *ZONE* will be even bigger and better than ever before. We are confident this will make us even more of an authority on everything game related, and I look forward to your feedback on this development when it arrives.
Best regards, enjoy the issue

Chris Anderson
Editor



Ⓢ Tribes 2 will be at the forefront of online-only gaming

TOP STORY



HIDDEN & DANGEROUS, IT'S THE...

ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW

DEVELOPER Illusion Softworks

PUBLISHER Take 2 Interactive

WEBSITE www.illusionsoftworks.com

EXPECTED RELEASE DATE End 2000

IN SUMMARY

You've seen *The Godfather* and you want to be a gangsta. Well, here's your chance. This game gives you the opportunity to work your way through a huge city in America, completing missions on foot and in vehicles.

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

It's from the developers of *Hidden & Dangerous*, and it's using an enhanced version of the *Insanity* engine. The level of detail is unbelievable, with more than 30 vehicles to steal and smash. We reckon this could be a Classic.

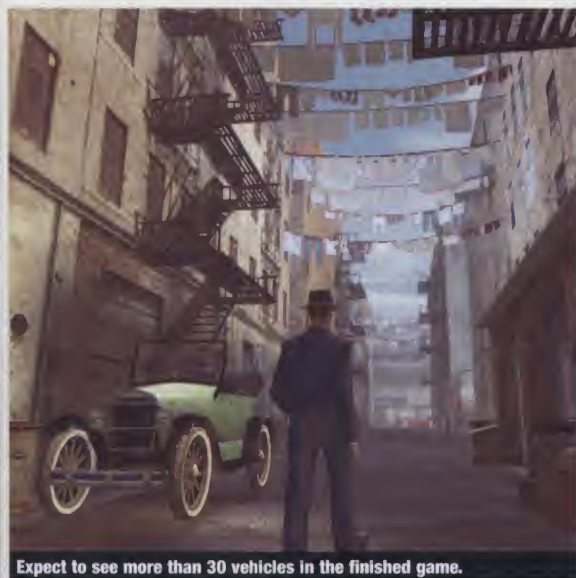
MAFIA

A man who doesn't spend time with a game like this, can never be a real man. Ain't dat da truth?

★ **SLEEPING WITH THE FISHES** Dave Woods



"I can't remember the last time you invited me to your house for a cup of coffee."



Expect to see more than 30 vehicles in the finished game.



Ⓢ We're scared of this Goodfella already.



Ⓢ Get ready for some driving and machine gunning action.

Here's the rub. It's prohibition time. Jobs are scarce and moral is low. The city is effectively being run by two rival crime families. If you've got a job you're lucky, and if you've got any sense you'll stay out of trouble. Get involved and you're a marked man, and marked men normally end with extra ventilation.

Take Tommy. A cabbie who kept his head and foot down. Getting people from A to B was his craft and he was good at it. Until the day he managed to get in the way of a hit. Losing the job was only the start of his troubles, and his career as a full-time gangster.

Mafia is the latest project from the *Hidden & Dangerous* team, which is just one reason why we're hugely excited about its prospects. Set in an imaginary US city, Lost Heaven, *Mafia* is going to be built around an enhanced version of the *Insanity* engine. And the prospect of a fine-

tuned version of *Hidden & Dangerous* set in the gangster-riddled prohibition era is almost too much to bear.

It gets better though. Lost Heaven is big (10sq km, surrounded by 40sq km of suburbs) and rumoured to be extremely detailed. None of the buildings will be repeated and designs are based on historical photographs and photo-realistic textures.

Vehicles and pedestrians make the city live and breathe, with the police on hand to ensure that law and order is maintained. And that includes you. Commit an offence in public and you're likely to be hounded, clapped in irons and left to rot in some dingy dirthole - unless you've got them in your pocket, of course.

Throughout the game you're given missions by the Don. Some of these involve car chases, others are going to follow the more traditional *Hidden & Dangerous* route, in third-person mode, creeping and shooting your way around the city streets, cracking safes and even the odd assassination

involving public dignitaries. Unlike *H&D* you only control the main character. Where other characters join you the game's AI is going to be tested to the limit.

The potential of this title is huge. By using such a rich and interesting setting, *Mafia* is sure to attract every

to have to be spot on, and a lot better than in *H&D*. Also, the driving sections may dilute from the stealth 'em up action we all love. If these fears prove unfounded then we might possibly have a brand new Classic on our hands. ☑

“By using such a rich and interesting setting, *Mafia* is sure to attract every would-be hood”

would-be hood, and with the promise of the improved *Insanity* engine and the talents of the *H&D* development team behind it, the reality might just be as good as the concept.

We do have a few concerns though. The AI of your companions is going



Ⓢ Ride taxis or steal your own wheels.



Notice the long shadows.
Night is creeping across
the land.

WAR ON A DISTANT PLANET

ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW

DEVELOPER Cauldron
PUBLISHER Blue Byte
WEBSITE www.battleisle.com
EXPECTED RELEASE DATE September

IN SUMMARY

Fourth in the long-running strategy series, *Battle Isle: The Andosia War* picks up the story from where its predecessor left off — right in the middle of a new war. Combining real-time resource management and turn-based strategy, it's a 3D game that offers depth, tactics and stunning graphics.

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

The big deal is simply that *Battle Isle* is making a return after five years. *Incubation* — *Battle Isle*'s 1997 squad-based spin-off was good, but for epic warfare across an entire planet it didn't quite cut the mustard. It's good to see that Blue Byte is keeping the game true to its roots, disregarding the trend for fast-paced real-time strategy, while embracing some of its more interesting facets.

BATTLE ISLE: THE ANDOSIA WAR

***Battle Isle* rages on, but now it's in 3D for the first time**

★ **HEXED** Richie Shoemaker



Setting up effective defences will be a priority.



OK, so the buildings look a bit knobby.



Zoom right in on the action.

As with its predecessors, *Battle Isle 4* will sport in-game cut-scenes.

Take the battle across land, sea and air.

If you think real-time strategy is too fast-paced and turn-based strategy is too ponderous, maybe you should be thinking about a game that combines the two. *The Andosia War* from Blue Byte aims to do just that and seeing as it's the fourth in the ever-popular *Battle Isle* series, you can pretty much assume it'll do it well.

Released in 1991, *Battle Isle* single-handedly made turn-based strategy acceptable. Previously the choice for

Battle Isle 2 took the concept even further, incorporating 3D in-game cut-scenes that played out each battle. Don't tell my mum, but *Battle Isle 2* was the reason I bought a PC (as well as for word processing, of course).

Chronicling a war on a distant planet, the series is now set for its fourth episode, and like so many other strategy game serials, is about to take the plunge into 3D.

As is the current trend for 3D strategy, *Battle Isle 4* will sport cutting

time while the battles will be played out over a series of turns.

While Blue Byte is developing the storyline and holding the press at bay, Slovenian developer Cauldron is doing all the donkey work: threading together lines of code with an impressive 3D engine that they came up with well before Blue Byte became involved.

At E3, where the game was on show, we were treated to some superb environmental effects, with true day/night cycles and weather that can have disastrous effects on armoured units. Another feature that seems to have fallen out of favour with many developers recently is naval strategy and on this point *Battle Isle 4* doesn't disappoint, the sense of scale in this respect is spot on.

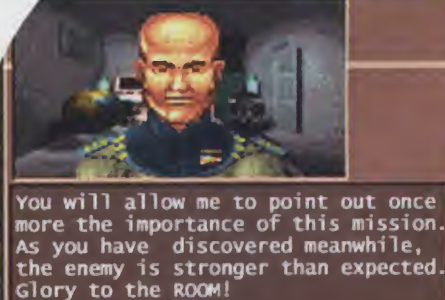
As with previous games in the series, players will be able to choose either of the two sides throughout 20 missions and Blue Byte is planning to support the multiplayer side of the game with new updates and units via its website. For now, however, we'll be content to get our hands on the single-player game. **PCZ**

“Where *Battle Isle 4* differs from other 3D strategy games is that while the base-building, research and supply are in real-time, battles are played out in turns”

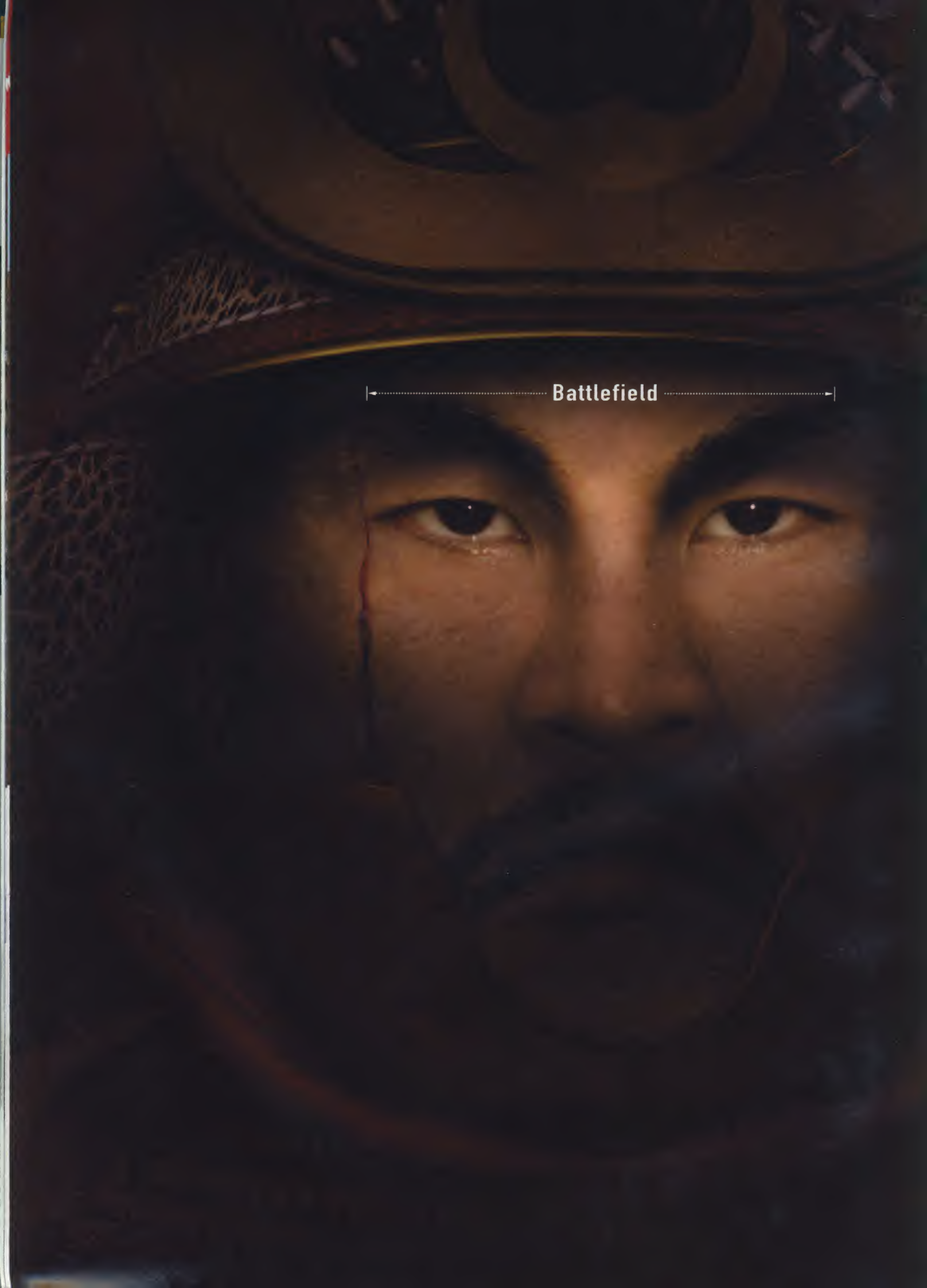
balding tabletop wargamers, strategy games on computer-generated maps made of hexes were at best incomprehensible to the general populous and in the main still are. For sure they offered depth, but it wasn't until *Battle Isle* came along that people took any notice.

edge 3D visuals, all set on a new planet where a breakaway sect has declared war on Chromos – the setting for the previous three *Battle Isle* games. Where *Battle Isle 4* differs from the current crop of 3D strategy games is that the base-building, research and supply will be in real-

Battle Isle 2 from 1993.



You will allow me to point out once more the importance of this mission. As you have discovered meanwhile, the enemy is stronger than expected. Glory to the ROOM!



— Battlefield —



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PC GAMER



"93%. It's a classic ... this is the game that all new RTS titles will be judged against. The most realistic, involving and playable strategy game you're likely to find"

PC ZONE



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E3 2000

NEWS EDITOR Richie Shoemaker



Held in sunny Los Angeles (not that we managed to catch any rays while we were there), E3 is the world's biggest showcase for the games industry and

it is the place where we finally get to see the games that will be rocking our world in the coming months. Some of these games are featured over the next dozen or so pages, some aren't - a fact which you can put down to the whole shindig ending right in the middle of our deadlines, as was the case last year.

If you want to know what impressed me the most I would have to say that, unlike last year when Chris Roberts' *Freelancer* stole the show, this year there were a hell of a lot more new games vying for people's attention: Activision's *Return To Castle Wolfenstein* was perhaps the game most people were looking out for and, with more of a cartoon feel that you would expect, no one came away disappointed with what they saw, least of all me.

On the LucasArts stand, behind closed doors as always, the fourth in the *Monkey Island* series was on view and, although it was difficult to gauge how the story will pan out, it looked nothing short of spectacular and promises to be the best - and hopefully the funniest - in the series to date.

Other games that we've seen before but didn't mind seeing again were Bungie's *Halo* and Sierra's *Tribes 2*, both offering 3D action with graphics that make the current crop of shooters look like mud. *B-17 2* was easily the best flight sim on show and, for strategy, Westwood's *Red Alert 2* had more people rubbing shoulders trying to squint a look than almost any game on display. There were almost too many good games to mention: Eidos' *Republic* looked amazing, as did *Ultima Online 2*.

What really struck me though was that nowhere, in no back room or secret cubbyhole, was *Duke Nukem Forever* to be seen. Again 3D Realms had shunned the limelight, preferring instead to work from home, though I'm sure I saw the boss man George Broussard wandering around.

If all this sounds as if I was blown away, then I have to admit I was. But you also have to take into consideration that I'm writing this in my hotel room, after only the first day. Tomorrow and the day after there will be a lot more to see, all of which - whatever I've missed - will be included next issue. If you can't wait until then, check out www.pczone.co.uk for all the E3 news and views as it happens... I mean happened.



THE PCZONE CHARTS

What's in, out, up and down

P.23



chartTrack

THE APE ESCAPE

The *Monkey Island* series returns to inject some new life into the adventure genre



"You can just wait for our wedding night!"



Planet Threepwood? Wonder if they serve monkey burgers.

There are still some of us who sigh with nostalgia for the golden age of adventure games, a time when point 'n' click classics appeared almost every month. And no other company is responsible for more of those classics than LucasArts: *Maniac Mansion*, *Day Of The Tentacle*, *Sam & Max*, *Indiana Jones And The Fate Of Atlantis*, *The Dig* and, of course, the *Monkey Island* series. Few games have made us laugh more or kept us more enthralled with their puzzles as those starring the world's worst pirate, Guybrush Threepwood. We thought we'd seen the last of LucasArts' adventures when the brilliant *Grim Fandango* was released well over a year ago, but *Escape From Monkey Island* proves it hasn't forgotten the genre completely.

The story is rather complicated, and goes something like this: Guybrush's new bride and the Governor, Elaine, is the victim of a vicious campaign by the evil Charles L. Charles, who is after her job. Guybrush then becomes embroiled in a complex series of events involving thievery and voodoo as he helps her with her re-election campaign and uncovers a scheme to wipe out the Tri-Island Area using the Ultimate Insult.

As you can see from the screenshots, the graphics are in gorgeous 3D and the humour promises to be as intelligent and tongue-in-cheek as ever. The game should arrive sometime in the autumn and our pointing 'n' clicking fingers are already quivering in anticipation.

ONLINE DIARY

Find out what's happening with ADSL, online footy and Barrysworld

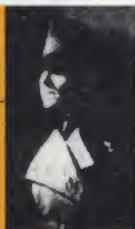
P.30



MAN WHO KNOWS

The very latest industry gossip

P.32



WHATEVER HAPPENED TO...?

Some more games that should've been here by now

P.33



HOTSHOTS

Big games and even bigger pictures

P.34



PCZ



Either I'm hallucinating, or that's a magic mushroom.



Alice. Not quite how we remember her from the films.

Excuse me please, where's the post office?

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THROUGH THE SHOOTING GLASS

As you've never seen her before, angry Alice fights against the odds to put the wonder back in to Wonderland...

Everyone's seen or read *Alice In Wonderland*, a story about a cute little girl with pigtails who is transported to a mythical and surreal land.

While we were at E3, EA unveiled its much talked about phantasmagoric third-person action/adventure based around this popular children's story, *American McGee's Alice*.

It was the first time we'd seen the game running, and we were suitably impressed. Utilising an enhanced version of the *Quake III* engine, it looked superb, and the action and puzzles were of the highest quality. This is hardly surprising considering that American McGee previously designed levels for both *Doom II* and the *Quake* series, and the development team Rogue Entertainment created the *Quake II* add on *Ground Zero*.

AMA will be set after Alice's last two adventures, *Alice's Adventures In Wonderland* and *Through The Looking Glass*. After receiving a distress call from Wonderland, Alice returns to find the once beautiful world in disarray and decay, a state brought about by the evil Queen of Hearts. Taking

the role of Alice, you must undo the evil that has engulfed Wonderland and return it to its previous state of happiness and tranquillity.

During the demonstration, we saw several well-known locations from Wonderland, including

“After receiving a distress call from Wonderland, Alice returns to find the once beautiful world in disarray, thanks to the evil Queen of Hearts”

the Pool of Tears, the Mushroom Forest and the Mad Hatter's Domain. The backdrops and scenery we saw was all very impressive as was the rendering and animation of each character. We were also informed that the final version of the game will feature all the usual old favourites from the *Alice In Wonderland* tales, including the Mad Hatter, Tweedle Dee and Tweedle Dum and, of course, the Jabberwocky.

Your quest to liberate Wonderland will be fraught with danger, and the gaming world will be full of action and puzzle solving. Before you get to confront the wicked Queen herself, you will have to dispose of a host of nasties, including sadistic card guards, demonic fire imps and jebberspawn. Obstacles, such as the labyrinth like Fortress of Doors and the tricky and confusing Psychedelic Funhouse, will also lie in your path. You won't be alone however, as helping hands and useful tips will be provided by the Cheshire Cat and White Rabbit. Alice will also be equipped with an array of deadly weapons, such as roll nasty dice and an exploding jack-in-the-box.

The couple of hours we spent looking at *American McGee's Alice* proved to us that this could be one of the hits of the year. With a projected autumn release date, there's still enough time for Rogue Entertainment to perfect the gameplay and tweak the graphics. If it lives up to its promise, then we might just see AMA set a new standard in the third-person action/adventure genre.



The success of space sims depends on the quality of their interfaces. This one looks the business.

The Enterprise heads to the depressing hole that is Deep Space Nine.

BURNING BRIDGES

Star Trek's new space combat shooter looks like beating *Star Wars* at its own game

Forget for a minute the advantages and disadvantages of *Star Trek* and *Star Wars* in terms of licences and source material, or how many fans each of them has, and concentrate instead on the quality of the games each one has inspired. It doesn't take too long to realise that it's no real contest: *Star Wars* wins hands down.

If you think of space combat sims, the situation is even more lopsided; *Star Wars* has some of the best examples in the genre (such as *TIE Fighter* and *X-Wing Alliance*) while Trekkies have to make do with the somewhat mediocre *Starfleet Academy*

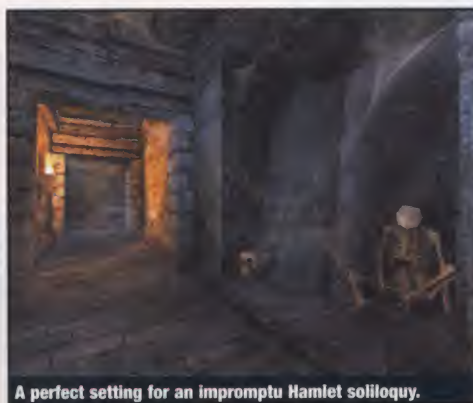
and the forthcoming (and hopefully much better) *Klingon Academy*.

That is all set to change with Activision's announcement of *Star Trek: Bridge Commander*. Developed by Totally Games, creator of the *X-Wing* series, which practically guarantees the superb quality of the finished game, *Bridge Commander* is set in The Next Generation universe and features the overworked voices of the tireless Patrick Stewart (Picard) and Brent Spiner (Data).

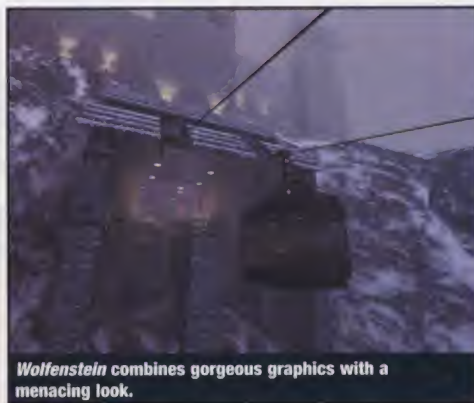
Don't make the mistake of thinking that this is an *X-Wing* game wearing a *Star Trek* mask, though;

there's much more to it than that. As the eponymous commander you can view the bridge from a first-person perspective, seeing the 3D crew members lazing about. You can bark orders at them and even tell them to sod off, sit in their chairs and take over their stations. As your ship takes damage the crew will fall in spectacular stunt fashion over exploding panels and convulse violently in perfect choreography, just like in every episode you've ever seen. The space combat itself can also be viewed from a third-person perspective, adding greater variety to the action. In the shops sometime next year.





A perfect setting for an impromptu Hamlet soliloquy.



Wolfenstein combines gorgeous graphics with a menacing look.



Reminds us of the Nazi base in the first Indiana Jones film.

WOLFENSTEIN RETURNS

The classic first-person shoot 'em up makes a spectacular comeback

Doom might have put 3D shooters on the world map, but the game that started the revolution was id Software's *Wolfenstein 3D*, a nazi 'em up that was recently emulated, or rather mutilated, by *Mortyr*. To set things right, Activision has announced *Return To Castle Wolfenstein*, currently being developed by Gray Matter, formerly known as Xatrix, the creator of *Kingpin*.

Once again you take on the role of William Blazkowicz, an American secret operative intent on wiping out the Third Reich's evil soldiers. Your mission is to stop Himmler (the head of the Gestapo and the Waffen-SS) from carrying out

his plan of creating a race of super soldiers by raising the dead with a combination of bio-engineering, the occult and a fair share of total madness. If there was a game at E3 that everyone walked away from looking absolutely gobsmacked, this was it. Making full use of the *Quake III* engine (id is closely involved in the development) and adding a new scripting system, it looks simply stunning.

Cobwebs flutter weakly in corridors as a gust of wind blows them down, and sound and light combine to create one of the most atmospheric experiences we've ever witnessed. Even at this early stage we can safely say

that *Return To Castle Wolfenstein* is going to be something very special indeed.

The weapons include grenades, a Luger pistol, MP40 machine guns, flame throwers and experimental guns, all of which you'll be using against German guards, officers and dogs who team up, back off and demonstrate an outstanding level of AI. There are suggestions of Allied soldiers working with you on some levels and tons of multiplayer options, which should provide an interesting WWII twist on the usual *Quake* frag fests. The low point is that we're going to have to wait until well into next year before we see the final game.





SHOOT 'EM' UP



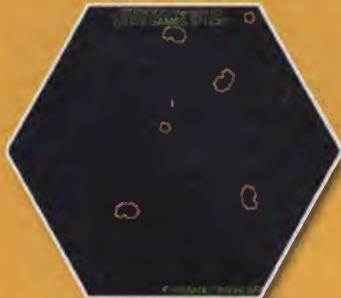
RTS



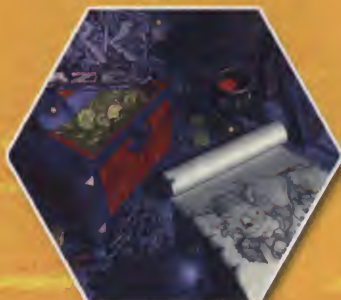
BEAT 'EM' UP



RETRO



RPG



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Platform



Shoot'Em'Up



Beat'Em'Up

VOLITION SHOOT 'EM UP

Teasing screenshots have been released by Volition, the developer of the *FreeSpace* and *Descent* series, that suggest that the team are – along with *FreeSpace 3* and *Summoner* – working on a first-person action game. Apart from looking quite superb and obviously set a short time into the future, Volition has told us nothing: no title (Red Faction is the projects codename), no release date, or any details on the form the gameplay will take – but we assume it will involve



More on who these guys are next issue.

killing lots of bad guys. By looking at the screenshots, however, one feature that stands out is the dynamic terrain. By firing at walls players will eventually be able to blast their way through to new sections of the map. Interestingly Volition has removed links from its website referring to *Descent 4*. Could it be that its first-person game is somehow linked with the *Descent* series? As soon as we have sent our spies in we'll reveal just what the secretive bunnies at Volition have been up to.



Volition's own 3D engine leaves more than just bullet holes.



Before the shooting starts.

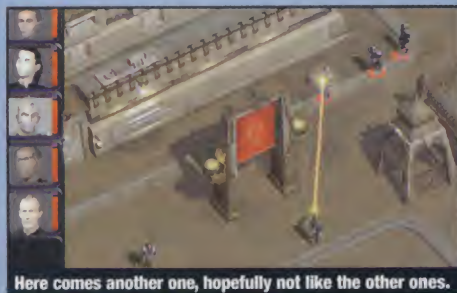
STAR TREK GOES AWAY

It's becoming increasingly difficult to keep up with the number of *Star Trek* games in development, let alone what series they are based on. Unfortunately, Activision is doing nothing to stem the confusion, as you won't be surprised to hear another is on the way, *Star Trek: Away Team*.

Set in the realms of The Next Generation universe, *Away Team* focuses on squad-level strategy in the *X-COM* style, offering a real-time strategy game where, as the captain of an elite commando unit, the aim is to select

and direct a unit of 22 specialists through a set of increasingly difficult missions, with characters gaining in experience if they survive.

Medical experts, engineers and red-shirted security grunts will make up the bulk of the player's teams, with standard and specialist equipment available to each, including phasers and tricorders. Expect many of the established races to make an appearance throughout the game when it arrives next year.



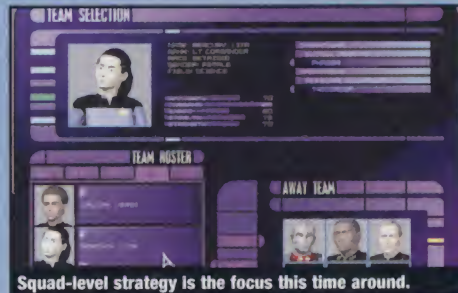
Here comes another one, hopefully not like the other ones.



It's up, up and Away Team.



You must choose your team carefully.



Squad-level strategy is the focus this time around.

DESERT ISLAND CDS

If Erin Roberts, producer of *Privateer*, *Strike Commander* and the recent *StarLancer*, was stranded on a desert island with a PC and an unlimited power supply, what games would he take with him?



- ★ **COMMAND & CONQUER** (Virgin)
- ★ **STRIKE COMMANDER** (Interplay)
- ★ **SID MEIER'S GETTYSBURG** (EA)
- ★ **DOOM 2** (Virgin)
- ★ **ELITE** (Acornsoft)*

*choice if allowed only one game

Comment

"*Dune 2* was superb, but the original *Command & Conquer* was just so well balanced and such a superb multiplayer game that I'd take that instead. I'd take *Strike Commander*, which OK I worked on, but it was the first flight simulator that was story driven. Maybe I'd spend the time developing a sequel. I love the whole concept of the American Civil War, so *Sid Meier's Gettysburg* would be my top strategy choice – although it wasn't a great single-player game it was fantastic in multiplayer, but I don't know how well that would work on a desert island. *Doom 2* I'd take just because it scared the life out of me and *Elite* would be my top choice because when I first played it on the BBC it was just so amazing.

That one game has inspired me to this day, and on a desert island I would happily go back and play it again."





Quake III: Team Arena: better than Unreal Tournament?



Rip into Quake III with the new chaingun

TEAMPLAY FOR QUAKE III

It's official, there's a new mission pack coming for *Quake III Arena*.

Quake III has probably taken up more man hours in this office than beer, cigarettes and football. Combined. Which is a pretty sad situation really and one that's going to get worse thanks to the imminent arrival of an official mission pack. As the name suggests, *Quake III: Team Arena* is going to concentrate on co-operative and strategic teamplay scenarios, with two new game modes already confirmed. In the first, teams have to

protect a monument in their base, while attempting to destroy their opponents. When not under attack the monuments will regenerate hit points. The other confirmed game involves collecting artefacts that appear in the place of a fragged opponent. You have to collect these and take them back to your base to display as grisly trophies and gain points.

To add another dimension to the strategy of *Quake III*, new power-ups are going to be employed. In effect, these enable you to take on the attributes of different 'classes'. So you can opt for a speed power-up (scout) or go for a damage doubler (soldier). These power-ups last until you get killed, and, in the meantime, no one else from your team

has access to the same one. When you die the power-up reappears and you can collect the same one or switch classes.

New weapons include a proximity mine launcher and the return of the nailgun and chaingun. The pack is completed with a set of brand new skins and logos, designed to make it easy to distinguish friend from foe.

It's exciting stuff, not least because id hasn't released an official mission pack since the Master Levels for *Doom*. Also, the teamplay element was the only side of *Quake III* that didn't shine, and if id can successfully execute *Team Arena* it could put *Quake* back on top of the pile, where it belongs.

Ⓚ New skins and logos to identify friend from foe.

I-WAR SEQUEL

Particle Systems has announced *Independence War 2: The Edge Of Chaos*, a sequel to 1997's *I-War*, the game that put the simulation into space combat. *Independence War 2* very much follows the lead of *Battlecruiser* by offering a more freeform universe this time around with a brand spanking new graphics engine to help it all come alive.

There will, of course, be a range of capital ships to captain, with new technologies to steal, trade and make use of. Most of all, however, *I-War 2* again offers a rich story with new characters to meet and dynamic AI and economics. *Independence War 2* is currently on course for a winter release, again through Infogrames.



All 16 star systems will feature dynamic space traffic.



I-War 2 still with a Newtonian physics model.



An engineering panel will allow Captains to make repairs.



At E3, *Independence War 2* gathered quite a crowd.

CHARTS

All you need to know about which games are selling by the shedload, plus the buzz on the streets – where you tell us what you think

THE TOP 10

MAY	JUN	TITLE	DEVELOPER	PUBLISHER	SCORE
7	1	CHAMP MAN 99/00	SPORTS INTERACTIVE	EIDOS	92%
4	2	THE SIMS	MAXIS	EA	86%
NE	3	STARLANCER	DIGITAL ANVIL/WARTHOG	MICROSOFT	81%
-	4	C&C TIBERIAN SUN	WESTWOOD	EA	82%
3	5	C&C TIBERIAN SUN FIRESTORM	WESTWOOD	EA	58%
10	6	UNREAL TOURNAMENT	EPIC/DIGITAL EXTREMES	INFOGRAMES	90%
-	7	HALF-LIFE	VALVE/GEARBOX	SIERRA	95%
-	8	HALF-LIFE OPPOSING FORCE	VALVE/GEARBOX	SIERRA	85%
-	9	HALF-LIFE GENERATIONS	VALVE/GEARBOX	SIERRA	95%
-	10	DELTA FORCE 2	NOVALOGIC	NOVALOGIC	63%

THE TOP 10

MAY	JUN	TITLE	DEVELOPER	PUBLISHER	SCORE
3	1	THE SIMS	MAXIS	EA	86%
6	2	CHAMP MAN – SEASON 99/00	SPORTS INTERACTIVE	EIDOS	92%
2	3	SOLDIER OF FORTUNE	RAVEN SOFTWARE	ACTIVISION	80%
4	4	F1 2000	EA SPORTS	EA	75%
7	5	DELTA FORCE 2	NOVALOGIC	NOVALOGIC	63%
1	6	STAR WARS: FORCE COMMANDER	LUCASARTS/RONIN	ACTIVISION	81%
NE	7	IMPERIUM GALACTICA 2	DIGITAL REALITY	INFOGRAMES	83%
NE	8	STARLANCER	DIGITAL ANVIL/WARTHOG	MICROSOFT	81%
9	9	AOE II: THE AGE OF KINGS	ENSEMBLE STUDIOS	MICROSOFT	90%
5	10	STAR TREK: ARMADA	ACTIVISION	ACTIVISION	74%

(Compiled by Chart Track © ELSPA 2000)



Original, dull, addictive – that's what you think of *The Sims*.

CHART COMMENT

BASED ON CHART TRACK TOP 10

After the video release of *The Phantom Menace*, it was no surprise to see *Force Commander* at the top spot this month. Activision is no doubt rubbing its collective palms, content to see *FC* as well as *SoF* and *Armada* in the higher reaches of the chart.

But where the hell are this month's new releases? For the record, the neat *Need For Speed Porsche 2000* debuted a disappointing 38 and *Empire's* spiffing helicopter simulation *Comanche Hokum* only managed 30. Other recent releases have plummeted: *Ultima: Ascension* has dropped to 13, *Final Fantasy VIII* is at 16 and *Risk II* has vanished from the top 40 altogether. You're a strange lot.

Richie Shoemaker

THE BUZZ ON THE STREETS

"I've bought *Armada* and *Imperium Galactica 2*, and I think they are both fantastic. I love the graphics in *Armada*, I think the storyline towards the end is great, and the real actor's voices are cool. *IG2* was also great fun, and I think the research part of the game is very good. I recommend both games fully. I was disappointed that *Messiah* was not in the charts. It's an original game that deserves to sell well."

Gareth Brierley, Manchester

"Looking down the list, I'm surprised to find that I own none of the Top 10, which is quite a rarity. Looking at the older titles in there I then realised I shouldn't be quite so surprised – they're a pretty mediocre selection. However, on the new release front, both *IG2* and *StarLancer* might be worth a look."

Mike Rovardi, Middlesbrough

"*The Sims* really is quite dull. I was really looking forward to the game for ages until I got my hands on it, but I stopped playing it after a few days. I remember thinking "this game is a really good idea" and now I just think "no it isn't". Thank God games don't make you do things in real life or I might get a job."

Eddie Amphlett, Huddersfield

"It's got to be a cause for concern that just about everyone seems to prefer designing houses in *The Sims* to actually playing the game. The game itself gets dull very quickly – after you've recreated your real-life family, got them dabbling in homosexuality and killed them off in chip-pan fires, where do you go next?"

Alex Woodland, Bristol

RETRO CHARTS

1 YEAR AGO...

- 1 **Championship Manager 3** (Eidos)
- 2 **Star Wars: X-Wing Alliance** (Activision)
- 3 **RollerCoaster Tycoon** (Hasbro)
- 4 **Civilization: Call To Power** (Activision)
- 5 **TOCA 2: Touring Cars** (Codemasters)

2 YEARS AGO...

- 1 **Star Wars: Supremacy** (Virgin)
- 2 **StarCraft** (Sierra)
- 3 **Tomb Raider II** (Eidos)
- 4 **Championship Manager 97/98** (Eidos)
- 5 **Ultimate Soccer Manager 98**

5 YEARS AGO...

- 1 **Frontier: First Encounters** (Gametek)
- 2 **Discworld** (Psychosis)
- 3 **Star Wars: Dark Forces** (Virgin)
- 4 **TFX** (Ocean)
- 5 **Dragon Lore** (Mindscape)

COMPETITION

WIN THE ENTIRE VIRGIN TOP 10!

PC ZONE and Virgin have teamed up to give you the chance to win every game in the current Top 10. All you have to do to enter the draw is answer this simple question:

Question: Due out next year, what is the free form sequel to the recently released *StarLancer*?

Just answer the above question and send it on a postcard, along with *all* the information requested, to the address below.

➊ Name / Address / Postcode / Daytime phone number / Email / Job title / Company name / Age if under 18

➋ Please tell us if you do not wish to receive details of further special offers or new products from other companies

➌ Are you a current subscriber to PC ZONE?

Answers on a postcard to: PC ZONE Chart Compo (CPCZ001A), Dennis Publishing, PO Box 154, Bradford BD1 5RZ. Closing date: Thursday 29 June.

➍ Terms and conditions: Winners will be notified by post. No cash alternative. Prizes not necessarily as shown. No correspondence will be entered into. The Ed's decision is final. All the other usual competition rules, conditions and restrictions apply.

SHORTS

MOTLEY TRIBES CRUE

With *Tribes 2* looking oh so lovely and offering the potential to be an epic multiplayer first-person shooter, together with a single-player game that could rival *Unreal Tournament*, we were dismayed to hear that soft rockers Motley Crue will have one of their new singles pumped through the game. Additionally, the Crue will provide exclusive in-game sounds, with grating guitar riffs accompanying the action. Publisher Sierra proclaims, "Motley Crue's musical style and edge will really complement the gameplay found in *Tribes 2*." We say, no it won't. The case continues.



DOGS FOR CHRISTMAS

Out for Christmas in order to coincide with the movie release is *102 Dalmatians: Puppies To The Rescue*. As you would expect it's a kids platform game, with 20 levels set across London, featuring puzzles to solve and all sorts of extra gubbins that will have everyone over the age of 12 reaching for the sick bag. It's cute, colourful and published by Eidos.



DUKE GOES HUNTING

So impressed was 3D Realms with *Carnivores I & II* that it has announced the developer of the series will be making a similar game starring none other than *Duke Nukem*. *Carnivores* is essentially a hunting game, the type popular in the States, the difference being, instead of tracking down turkey and deer, the player was hunting dinosaurs on an alien planet. *Duke Nukem: Endangered Species* will follow in a similar vein using the developer's own 3D engine. No release date has been set, but we shouldn't have too long to wait and, if it does arrive on these shores, you can bet it'll be at a budget price.



One in the face for the mutant scum.



Does this look like *Metal Gear Solid* or is it just us?

PROJECT EDEN

Core's new game – without Lara Croft

Reliant for so long on Lara Croft who, quite frankly, has started to get on our nerves recently, developer Core Design has decided to branch out a bit with *Project Eden*, an action adventure that actually has a promising story, and gameplay to match.

Set in a future where the Earth's enormous population reside in massive cities that stretch into the sky, *Project Eden* puts you at the head of an elite four-man squad, charged with cleaning up the upwardly sprawling

“Project Eden puts you at the head of an elite four-man squad, charged with cleaning up the sprawling metropolis”

metropolis. The rich live atop huge tower blocks and the poor in the crumbling ghettos below, where the sun never shines and criminal activity is rife. Throughout the many derelict areas, engineering teams are operating, constantly repairing the foundations of the huge buildings above. One such team, sent into repair automated processing equipment down at the Real Meat Factory, has gone missing. And guess who's being sent in to investigate?

Playable both in the first and third-person, *Project Eden* will allow you to control each character directly, much like *Hidden & Dangerous*, along with any remote equipment that the group gets to use. It features hideous deformed mutants and gang members and players will also be able to look down and see their feet. Out in the autumn, our only reservation will be how the AI works, but, after seeing the game at E3, it already looks impressive and we could be seeing a whole new series develop aside from Core's *Tomb Raider* franchise. Let's hope so anyway.



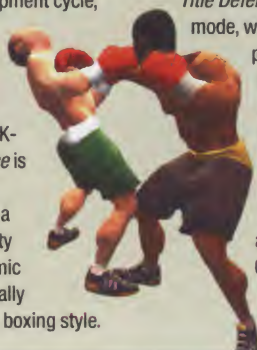
“Read ‘em their rights Danno.”



In this part of the city daylight is scarce.

READY TO RUMBLE

With Codemasters' *Prince Naseem Boxing* seemingly caught up in the development cycle, PC boxing fans may have to pin their hopes on another great hope. This time the unknown defender is going by the name of *Title Defence*. In development at UK-based Climax studios, *Title Defence* is rather more of a simulation than Codemaster's delayed game, with a control system that promises plenty of special moves, as well as dynamic AI, which features opponents actually learning to take advantage of your boxing style.



As well as training bouts and single matches, *Title Defence* will include a full career mode, where you start out at the back of pubs, with the aim of eventually becoming the undisputed world champ. Trainers will bark out strategies between rounds as you spit your guts into a plastic bucket and the crowd and commentator react to the action in the ring. Graphically, each fighter will be made up of more than 5,000 polygons and, being a



Frank had a hunch he was going to win.

simulation, you can expect plenty of blood to be flying, unless the referee stops the match. In fact, the only thing you won't be able to have is the ridiculous seven-figure sums that come with real-life boxing. But then you won't have your face caved in either. *Title Defence* will be out early next year.



And if you're ever late
for your dinner again...



That's one of them new camouflaged dragons. You don't see them in the sky.

LEGENDS OF MIGHT & MAGIC

As if there weren't enough *Might & Magic* games on the market, developer 3DO has announced *Legends Of Might & Magic*, yet another title based on the *M&M* universe. The series has taken somewhat of a beating of late, with the latest offering *Crusaders Of Might & Magic* receiving a mere 46 per cent in *PC ZONE* #90. However, 3DO is aiming the game at an online audience, claiming it will be the first Internet RPG that emphasises co-operative play. This, of course, is somewhat of a bold statement, what with Nihilistic's *Vampire* and Bioware's *Neverwinter Nights* boasting the same.

As with *Vampire*, you'll be able to join up with several other players over the Net (in this case up to six of you can play at once), and take part in a series of missions. If teamwork isn't your thing, you can go solo against 15 other human players over the Net, in a deathmatch style game.

Fundamentally, *LM&M* will be an RPG. However, there will be a far greater emphasis on action than in the more traditional gameplay of *Might & Magic VIII*. There's also going to be fewer character classes to choose from than usual (just six in all), in order to allow each one to have distinct and unique attributes.

Legends will be modular based, enabling gamers to pick and choose which sections of the game they wish to play. As well as a brand new gaming world, there'll be more familiar lands from previous games in the series, such as Enroth, Varn and Keen.

Graphically, *LM&M* looks superb, utilising the new Lichtech 2.0 engine in order to render characters in polygonal 3D. The down side to these visuals, is that the engine can't display as many evil creatures as previous *M&M* titles, so you'll have to make do with about 50 instead of the usual 200 odd.



Rudolph tries to throw off his reindeer-next-door image.

SHORTS

ALONE IN 1906

Darkworks, currently engaged in completing *Alone In The Dark IV*, has announced its follow-up as *1906*, again a 3D action adventure, inspired by the works of writer Jules Verne. Based on the *20,000 Leagues Under The Sea* novel, players will control a Captain Nemo-style character, ensuring, we assume, plenty of subaquatic adventures involving giant sea-creatures. While we're on the subject Southpeak Interactive's 'official' *20,000 Leagues* game has been canned.



GERMAN TECHNO

The German creator of the acclaimed *Anno 1602*, has announced its next game as *TechnoMage*, a 3D action-oriented RPG that, far from their previous strategy epic, offers a much more light-hearted challenge with eight separate worlds and 50 levels to explore.

The game, due out in the autumn, stars a character called Melvin. He looks just as he sounds.

LINKS 2001

One of the oldest digital golf games is about to get the biggest makeover of its life. The developers are looking to inject unprecedented realism, with a completely rebuilt rendering engine capable of delivering photo-realistic courses with shadows, reflections on water, trees and vegetation. It's also capable of delivering vertical edges and overhangs, which means you can look forward to getting caught in the sand with lips on bunkers and the like. The estimated time of arrival? Not until late this year unfortunately.





No *Worms World Party* screenshots yet, but here's *Worms Armageddon*.



Up to six people will be able to play at any one time.

WORMS PARTY'S ON

Team17 has announced the release of a new worms game, *Worms World Party*. Due out at the end of the year, it will join the increasing number of titles that are aimed primarily at online gaming.

You'll have the choice to play the game in three different ways, either with other people over the Net, all together in front of one PC, or a mixture of the two methods. *WWP* is going to have more than 400 game styles, which will surely keep even the most expert Wormsoholic happy for months.

For novices, there'll be an all new training mode, which will lead you through the basics and hopefully stop you from ending up as worm cannon fodder. With a total of 40 missions (all of which can be played over the Net) to master, and the option to customise flags, gravestones and team configurations, it looks as though we'll soon be waving goodbye to our social lives, just like we did with the previous games in the series. Remember, you have been wormed.

STARKY & HUTCH RIDE AGAIN



Hands up who had one?

After last year's *Driver* took driving games away from the mire of the racing formula and wrapped them up in mission-based action, Empire Interactive plan to follow suit, this time with the official license of what is perhaps *Driver*'s main influence – *Starsky & Hutch*.

Set for release sometime next year, *Starsky & Hutch* aims to resurrect the '70s based action series that made stars of its cast, including Antonio Fargas (who helped promote *Driver* last year), David 'Silver Lady' Soul and Paul Michael Glaser. Expect plenty of driving through stacked boxes in your Ford Gran Torino, 'jiving' with Huggy Bear and tripping over your flares.



The boys are back.





Boy scout camp fires were around long before Baden Powell thought them up.



Bridge the gap between the feuding kingdoms and reunite China.



An early Chinese version of a guitar.

WE THREE KINGS

Eidos has announced the development of a new RTS game, *Three Kingdoms: Fate Of The Dragon*. Based on the 14th century novel *Romance Of The Three Kingdoms*, the game will be set during one of the most turbulent periods in China's history, when the great Eastern Han Dynasty was in turmoil.

The story is based around the break up of China into three territories, following a peasant uprising in 184AD. Although the rebellion is crushed, it signals an end to the Dynasty, and rival warlords take control of the kingdoms.

It's going to be up to you to gain control of one of these provinces and embark on a mission to unify China by

raising an army, developing new technologies and conquering the other two kingdoms. From what we've seen so far, it looks as if it's going to be similar to *Age Of Empires II*, which is no bad thing. Expect to see *Three Kingdoms: Fate Of The Dragon* sometime towards the end of the year.





OK, so it's no *Tekken 3*, but it's not the worst beat 'em up we've ever seen.



Make billiards happen on the PC. If you really want to.



The power to make Brazil the world's worst team.

FAST TRACK TO MAKING YOUR OWN GAMES

There can't be too many of us PC gamers out there who haven't, at one time or another, tried our hand at programming. Granted, most of us gave up when we realised we actually had no grasp of Basic, let alone C++ but, the fact is, we've all dreamed about creating our own software. Too often it's the complexity of it all which scares us off, but a new program called *DVI Game Studio* from Fast Track Software Publishing, could help change the face of home programming.

We sat in on a demonstration of the program's capabilities, and were very impressed by what we saw. Although the games shown to us were relatively simplistic, we were amazed that they

required so few lines of code. An asteroid blasting game, which allowed 360 degree ship rotation, was programmed in front of our eyes, using less than 15 lines of code. This was made possible by the database of more than 1,000 sprites and sounds which come with the package.

However, it's *DVI Game Studios'* intuitive interface that makes programming so simple. It's been specifically designed to be accessible to beginners, yet powerful enough to allow more advanced programmers to attain professional results. Although we didn't see anything that could compare with today's crop of 3D accelerated games, there were some impressive graphical

demonstrations which proved that 100s of moving objects could be rendered on the screen at the same time, in resolutions ranging from 320x200 up to 1,024x768.

Other excellent features of this package include a step-by-step tutorial, 16 sample games, a powerful debugger, which allows line-by-line execution, a built in graphics editor, a font generator and a fully customised program editor.

The *DVI Game Studio* showed that it can massively simplify programming. At £34.99, this easy-to-learn language could well tempt more people to get into computer game coding, be it for fun or on a more professional level.

HELL RAIDER

Having neither heard of nor read Mike Mignola's *Hellboy* comic book series, news of a game to be based on them hardly raised a shrug in the office. However, after seeing the game at E3, interest levels rose significantly, not least because the game offers a wry slant on the tired format of *Tomb Raider & Co.*

More adventurous than Lara Croft, *Hellboy* will offer more in the way of puzzle solving, although sword fighting and shuffling various items around an inventory will play a significant part and, bizarrely, *Hellboy* will even be able to sit down and bash one out on his organ. A tune that is. In a church. Six huge levels, encompassing up to 20 locations each, should keep interest high and, if you must know, it should be out in July from Cryo Interactive.



Well, maybe the graphics could do with some work.



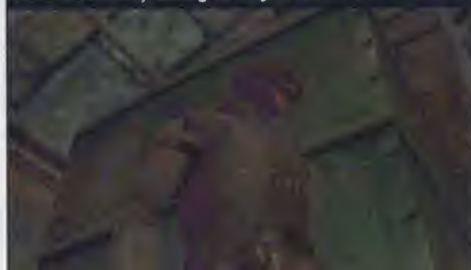
Play that funky music, *Hellboy*.

SOLID SHAPES UP

First it was, then it wasn't and now it seems that it is again. *Metal Gear Solid*, the PlayStation hit of stealth, sabotage and subterfuge, is coming to the PC.

Konami, developer of the PlayStation version, last year announced a cross-platform development deal with Microsoft, with each company having publishing rights to each others' games. *Metal Gear Solid* PC will be the first love child of the two companies, with Konami developing new features specific to the PC incarnation (mouse control, multiplayer features) and updating the graphics to take advantage of hardware acceleration. Microsoft will, of course, be publishing the game and you can safely assume that it will be extended for Microsoft's X-Box games console. We'll have more next issue.

Metal Gear Solid, making its way on to the PC.



TRUCK OFF

Racing games just seem to be getting bigger and bigger

Now that monster trucks have become passé two separate developers have decided that the next big thing – literally – to take the driving genre to the next level is truck racing.

Much more than a simple racing game is *Hard Truck 2*. Developed by Russian outfit SoftLab, *Hard Truck 2* offers Yorkie-munching armchair truckers the opportunity to purchase their own cab, buy goods in one town and sell them in another, eventually to upgrade, buy a new truck or set up a whole fleet of computer-controlled rigs. Because the game is set in one region covering more than 120km sq, SoftLab is hoping to liven things up with other companies

who are trying to put you out of business, as well as police and mafia vehicles that will try and run you off the road. There will even be helicopters buzzing overhead. If you prefer straight racing, then tracks will be included, as well as a clutch of multiplayer modes. The game has just hit US shelves, but unfortunately no UK release date is yet known. Just to confuse things, it will be known under a different name in some European countries, so if you see a game in your local store called *Rig 'N Roll*, you can bore the sales assistant with its 'real' name.

Mercedes Truck Racing, on the other hand, boasts official licences from Mercedes and the

FIA and comes from the same developers who brought us *Breakneck*. *Mercedes Truck Racing* is the most attractive looking game of the two by quite a margin. However, the gameplay will stick to the usual racing formula, featuring all the tracks in the Super Race season as well as a few extras thrown in. Vehicles will sport visible damage, tracks will be under threat of rain and, as well as the usual spread of multiplayer modes, drivers will be able to compete in an entire season. There is also talk of the developers throwing in a few weapons for good measure. Quite what Mercedes will have to say about it is another matter.

HARD TRUCK 2

Developer SoftLab NSK Publisher TBC Release Date TBC



Keep on trucking through day, night, rain or shine.



Stopping off for munchies.



Hard Truck 2 features fixed-trailers as well as semi-trailers. Whatever...

MERCEDES TRUCK RACING

Developer Syntetic Publisher THQ Release Date End of 2000



The best trucks yet seen in a game.



Sponsorship obviously isn't a problem.



The race in Spain is far from plain.

SHORTS

D-DAY FOR CLOSE COMBAT

The next game in the WWII real-time strategy series *Close Combat* is going for the big one, the D-Day landings. Subtitled *Utah Beach* and coded by Atomic Games, the game will feature a top-down view as commanders engage in squad-level combat, directing their band of GIs from the bloody Normandy landings as they advance to form a beachhead. Hopefully this time the developers will manage to sort out the flawed dynamic campaign that bogged the last game down and make a return to their former glory. Out this winter, *Close Combat V: Utah Beach* will be published by Mattel.

FREESPACE GALACTICA

A total conversion is in development to bring the *Battlestar Galactica* universe to *FreeSpace 2*. There are no details available on it as yet, but the developers are currently working off models that do actually look very good so far.



HALF-LIFE LIVES ON

In terms of shelf life, *Half-Life* has enjoyed a good 18 months in the upper reaches of the charts and development on the game seems far from over. *PC ZONE* Developer of the Year, Valve, has announced that another major update is on the way (it should be out now in fact) that pits civilians against soldiers across new Capture The Flag maps for the *Half-Life* expansion *Opposing Force*. The patch will also fix some non-critical bugs.



CULTURED LIVES

Funatics Development, the company who brought us *Settlers III*, is back with *Cultures*, a similar title dealing with the hypothetical conquest of America by Vikings. With a new interface and better graphics, *Cultures* also features detail into the life of each villager which may well rival *The Sims*. Published by THQ, the game should be in the shops in August.

A high speed Net service and a host of online football management games. For your pleasure...

★ LAGGED Richie Shoemaker

With the domestic football season over, and ending on something of an anti-climax, all eyes are turning to season 00/01, especially the annual batch of re-releases and season updates that September will bring to the PC soccer management scene. Even though Sports Interactive has yet to announce its plans for the Autumn, we already know of two soccer management games that are on the way.

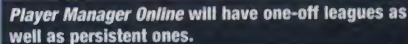
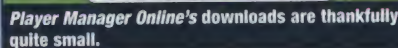
inconsistencies with the player stats, the game does look very promising.

Available as a free download, online managers will have to pay to play a season, which can last anything from two months up to eight months, depending on your preference, and it seems there will be cash money for the virtual league champions. But be warned: compared to the complexity of *Championship Manager*, *Player Manager Online* doesn't even come close. Although, you have to understand that if it did you'd be spending your days downloading highlights, such as the depth of the mighty *Championship Manager*. As an online game, however, *Player Manager Online* has serious potential.

The other online football management game has yet to be announced and remains a rumour. Rage Software, the UK developer and publisher of 3D games with eye splitting visuals, has recently acquired Caffeine Studios and an online football club-type organisation. Caffeine, you may remember, developed the average *Football World Manager* and its recent, and just as average, millennial sequel. The bonus is that Caffeine's game is well suited to online play and we expect big things of them.

Our hope is that *Championship Manager Online* isn't far away. As it stands though, with the depth that *Champ Man* has, a cut-down version may be a more realistic option. Whatever happens, the fight for the title has begun and Anco is off to the best of starts.

Anco is updating the stats as we speak.



- ★ A new version of the Wireplay client software is almost ready, and promises easier navigation and support for web-based games. We are also reliably informed that 50 new servers are being installed to help cope with the increasing number of games currently supported, which should make it smoother and faster.
- ★ Driving fans up for some online rally action can now play the excellent *Rally Masters* on Wireplay, which supports up to eight players. We tried it and it's remarkably fast. *Need For Speed Porsche 2000* on the other hand is incompatible with the current version of Wireplay software.
- ★ *Star Wars* fans can expect to be able to play *Star Wars: Force Commander* very soon on Wireplay. You'll need the latest 1.1 patch however, which you'll find on this month's cover disk.

For so long neglected within these pages, BarrysWorld (www.barrysworld.com) – one of the UK's favourite gaming services for first-person shooters – is ready to expand after finding some substantial financial backing. Set up as a practice server for *Quake* clans in 1997, BarrysWorld has grown steadily and currently plays host to more than 20,000 online gamers a month. The £3 million investment promises a faster service, with new servers being installed, hopefully by the end of the summer. Watch out Wireplay!

By now many UK Internet Service Providers are doing ADSL trials with the aim of offering the new high-speed service to users in the summer. BT Internet has also announced its price plan for the new service, which, if you register now, will save you nearly £150 on installation charges. The service will cost

you £39.99 as a flat monthly fee for unlimited use 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Some commentators have said this is too expensive but, in time, other companies are sure to start offering cheaper packages. Check out www.btopenworld.com for more information.



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TACHYON™

T H E F R I N G E

NOVALOGIC

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The Man who

NEW LARA, OLD DAISY

The Electronic Entertainment Expo (E3) rolled into Los Angeles once more, with games companies again clambering over each other in an attempt to provide the most vulgar showpiece of exploitation, an onerous task in an industry where baseball caps and suits are regularly worn together without shame. Silicon was utilised in a number of its compound forms, rictus grins were widely assumed, and clammy palms were pressed together in a sickening festival of insincerity. Business as usual.

Eidos set the tone by unveiling the new **Lara Croft** model, adhering rigidly to the old adage that there's no such thing as too young, only too ugly. In a further witless attempt to shift the umpteenth version of an increasingly mediocre game, the fictional upper crust adventuress is to be portrayed, for the time being, by a 16-year-old child from the bleak Northern outpost of **Rotherham**, Yorkshire.

Lucy Clarkson is the child in question, and the role was apparently suggested by none other than her father, who, according to an especially contrived press release, said to her: "You'd make a great Lara Croft". When she inevitably faces the bleak precipice of anonymity in a year's time, it will be interesting to see whether he suggests: "You'd make a great Playboy centrefold," with as much enthusiasm. Her boyfriend was also allegedly pleased with the appointment, and amazingly it turns out that he is actually a huge fan of **Tomb Raider**. Lucy squealed: "He's obsessed with games and loves Lara. Well, now he's got a Lara of his own!" As for securing the job, she beamed: "I'd been in South Africa on a modelling job and they'd told me to lose weight. I didn't fancy that so I was on my way home. And that was when I got the call telling me I was the new Lara. It was such fantastic news. It's such a high profile job – and one of the few that lets you keep your boobs and bum." Eidos seemed quite happy with its acquisition, although the **Core Design** executive arrested last year for soliciting sex from a nine-year-old girl was unavailable for comment.

Those who prefer the more mature woman weren't disappointed either, and the discerning pervert was to be found at the **Southpeak Interactive** stand, where it was promoting its new **Dukes Of Hazzard** game. Draped over the bonnet of the **General Lee** was none other than denim-clad **Daisy Duke**, aka ageing actress **Catherine Bach**. Despite an abundance of volunteers, she failed to make any serious inroads into **Annabel Chong's** record of 251 men in a day.

John Romero was taking on all-comers though, as **Daikatana** made its umpteenth and thankfully final appearance at the show. The hirsute designer has clearly had a lot of practice at the game, and was hosting a half-hearted Deathmatch competition, with lucky winners receiving posters and T-shirts. Losers were given a copy of the game and a picture of his girlfriend.

And the best thing about the show? I wasn't even there.



Pac-Man gives it large.



Galaga goes 3D.



Breakout.



Frogger returns for a second time.



Bud-wel-ser.

MORE ATARI CLASSICS ON THE WAY

Hasbro gets retro with its new line-up

Hot on the heels of its last batch of 'classic' remakes, Hasbro Interactive is set to unleash a fresh quartet of games, all with 3D acceleration, bright colours and multi-channel bleeps that should put the originals out of our minds for good. On the Atari label: *Galaga*:

Destination Earth, *Frogger 2*, and *Breakout* will arrive in September, followed by *Pac-Man* in October.

Frogger 2: Swampy's Revenge is the sequel to 1997's remake which, although unspectacular, still managed to clock up sales figures in the millions. This time around we can expect new power-ups and enemies, as well as a new character to control.

In *Galaga: Destination Earth* we can expect hordes of aliens intent on taking over the Earth,

with levels set in space and on the blue planet itself. Every third level will see a boss alien up for pasting, where players will be able to collect alien weapons to use against him.

There isn't much to say about *Breakout* that you couldn't gather from looking at the screenshot

(above). It'll be 3D, with plenty of themed levels, power-ups, bizarre ball types and animated paddles. Wow.

With *Pac-Man* the aim will be to collect five magical

power pills that have been scattered through time. It features 26 levels that range from the wild west to ancient Egypt and will encompass more than 130 mazes, throughout which the endearing ghosts will relentlessly hunt Pac down with new power-ups available to liven up the gameplay.

"Pac-Man will encompass more than 130 mazes, throughout which the endearing ghosts will relentlessly hunt Pac down"

OUR MOST WANTED

At E3 this year we saw hundreds of games, some new, some old. But compared to last year where there was lots to talk about but little to see, this year developers were showing off many games for the first time, some of which we hadn't even heard of before the show. In no particular order here are ten games from E3, all looking rather spiffing and none of which we'd seen before. Apart from a couple.

1	Halo (Take 2 Interactive)	March 2001
2	Alice (EA)	TBC
3	Return To Castle Wolfenstein (EA)	TBC
4	Black & White (EA)	September
5	Vampire: The Masquerade – Redemption (Activision)	June/July
6	Deus Ex (Eidos)	September
7	FreeLancer (Microsoft)	Early 2001
8	Escape From Monkey Island (Activision)	TBC
9	Star Wars: Episode I – Obi-Wan (Activision)	Winter 2000
10	Dreamland Chronicles: Freedom Ridge (Virgin)	2001



Ants are grouped into squads and you'll need a few to kill the boggle-eyed green thing.

ANT ATTACK

We took a look at Microids' 3D strategy game *Empire Of The Ants* waaaaaaay back, but having put the game to the backs of our minds we were all the more surprised when a demo copy recently arrived in the office. Apparently, the French developers are nearing the end of the game's three year development process, so we took a look, ahead of next month's review.

Played in real-time *Empire Of The Ants* has you selecting and directing the hungry insects as they strive to establish a colony against nature's harsh reality. Slugs, beetles and praying mantises are hungry for a feast and players will have to keep their workers safe, building chambers and collecting foods, while the soldiers go hunting and exploring. As well as rain, you'll have problems with stress, food shortages and seasonal changes. There will be 13 different types of ant to control across 11 missions, and we have to admit the game is rather fun and the control system fairly agreeable – even though much of it was in French. We'll see how the finished English game is next month.



The most lethal 'ant' in the game is the tank, basically four soldiers carrying a beetle.



Here's where you manage your anthill mob.

TICKER TAPE

STARTS++ *Star Trek* game #4073 – *Starfleet Command 2* is in development, a 3D real-time strategy featuring new races, ships and weapons **++STOP++** *Spec Ops* creator Zombie Studios, who apart from making use of the LithTech 2.0 engine for the third *Spec Ops* game, has announced that another first-person action is in development, this time using the *Tribes 2* engine – based on a 'full-length movie' no less **++STOP++** *Jetfighter IV: Fortress America* will see Take 2 heading skywards in *Top Gun* fashion later this year **++STOP++** Stephen King has a game of his own (read screensaver) and now it is fellow horror writer Clive Barker's turn. Using the *Unreal* engine, *Clive Barker's Undying* sounds a whole lot more interesting **++STOP++** Based on the Channel 5 rip-off of *The Crystal Maze*, Microids has announced *Fort Boyard Millennium*, a puzzle-based game, as you've probably already worked out. Previous versions have been big in France, apparently **++ENDS**

WHATEVER HAPPENED TO...

Rounding up the games that have gone astray



Transylvania's annual Hop Till You Drop contest stretches into its third day.

VAMPIRE: THE MASQUERADE - REDEMPTION

LAST SEEN PCZ #85

ORIGINAL RELEASE DATE Early 2000

After a two month wait, we've finally got our hands on the Beta version of Activision's much anticipated RPG *Vampire*. The game is currently being rigorously tested to iron out any remaining bugs and to hone the online section of the game. Although *Vampire* has been promising an appearance for the last three months, we feel confident (or about as confident as we can given its history) that next month we'll be seeing the final review code. Our first impressions of the Beta have been quite good so far. Graphically it's superb, and the excellent gameplay suggests that the finished version will provide hours of endless entertainment. So much so, that it could literally drain your life away and suck you dry of all of your spare time.

BLACK & WHITE

LAST SEEN PCZ #86

ORIGINAL RELEASE DATE Summer 2000

For quite some time it's been a common misconception that *Black & White* has been hugely delayed. This is partly due to the fact that chief designer Peter Molyneux has been talking excitedly about the game since he started the project. In truth, *Black & White* has only been in development for about two years, and is aiming for a September release date. The foundation code is complete, with both the game engine and art work in place. The developer, Lionhead, is currently working on gameplay challenges as well as some hugely complex AI (see page 149). If the final game lives up to the developer's ambition, and from what we've seen so far it looks like it will, then September can't come quickly enough.



I bet you think the sun shines out of your arse, don't you?

DEUS EX

LAST SEEN PCZ #89

ORIGINAL RELEASE DATE Spring 2000

Although the UK version of the game is finished, we're going to have to wait until August before we see Eidos' fantastic futuristic RPG *Deus Ex*. The reason for the delay is due to the games 9,000 lines of spoken dialogue, and the necessity to translate them into French, German, Spanish and Italian. Due to Eidos wanting a simultaneous worldwide release, we're just going to have to wait until all the other languages have been recorded. Still, never mind, at least there aren't masses of bugs that still need fixing or any huge problems with the game engine. Let's just be glad that the only delay worries we have now, are that the actors may fluff their lines.



The old inmate waited patiently by the toilet door for the new jailbird.

HOTSHOTS

The Force is nearly upon us, so here's a sneak peek at the forthcoming *Star Wars* epic



STAR WARS: EPISODE I - OBI-WAN

★ Activision • Out December

At this year's E3 we finally managed to sneak a look at the third instalment of LucasArts' *Dark Forces* series, *Obi-Wan*. We were beginning to think LucasArts may have lost its way, but after seeing the game in the flesh and talking to the developers, we're sure *Obi-Wan* will put them back on track.

Based, of course, on events in the most recent *Star Wars* film, *Obi-Wan* sees you guiding the Padawan learner right through to his eventual role as a fully-fledged Jedi Knight. Considering that in the film young Obi-Wan was off-screen for much of the time, the game will introduce many new areas to the early *Star Wars* trilogy, while Qui-Gon Jinn is off hobnobbing with the local dignitary. In true RPG style, you'll have to make use of your force powers, which, if successful, will improve

throughout the game. And rather than shunt out another first-person shooter, LucasArts is keen to ensure *Obi-Wan* is as much about stealth and tactics as it is light sabre duels and shoot outs with Battle Droids.

More importantly, we're told multiplayer games will allow others to play as Jar Jar Binks, meaning you'll be able to put paid to his return in any further instalments of the film. Well, maybe not, but so far the Force does seem to be with LucasArts for the foreseeable future.





You show them.

Number one seeded Brit Amir Haleem.

Concentration is what you need.

Brit Sujoy Roy: seeded 23rd.

STARS IN THEIR EYES

Tonight, Matthew, I want to be... one of the UK's first professional video games players

★NOT HOLDING HIS BREATH David McCandless



The gaming arena where titanic battles are fought and won.

Long gone are the days when winning a gaming competition would get you a mouse mat and a kiss from Saracen the Gladiator. These days the big US tournaments offer a US\$40,000 cash prize (believe us – you can get the entire cast of *Gladiators* to perform for you for that price). For the latest competition in Dallas, Texas, nine Brits entered, with one of our boys seeded 1st. Surely we would come, we would see and we would conquer?

Sujoy Roy was sitting at a desk, some point in late 1999, when it hit him. "I was at work feeling bored," the 24-year-old recalls, "not really doing much, dealing in the derivatives market, suits and bureaucracy all around me. I thought, 'What do I want out of life? If I've got a chance to do something I enjoy, something fun, yeah, why don't I do it?'"

At the same time, Amir Haleem (aka 'Hakeem'), his bitter enemy from the online *Quake* scene, was having a similar life-crisis. A few months before, he had opportunistically turned up at a huge *Quake* tournament in New York and to his – and everyone else's – surprise, he won the entire thing. There you go sir, US\$10,000 in cash. "After being at this huge event and feeling

like some kind of champion, I couldn't be bothered to sit in an office."

The boys put aside their differences and decided to have a stab at becoming the UK's first professional video games players. Within months they had snagged themselves a six-figure sponsorship deal – from Gameplay.com and Razer, the makers of a weird but cool gaming mouse, the Boomslang – and were getting up at 2pm and playing *Quake* all day – for a living. Nice.

Our boys had their eyes on the States, where, thanks to the antics of the millionaire übergamer Thresh, US pro-gaming has become a bona fide industry. The biggest events are run by the CyberAthletes Professional League (CPL) who hire huge hotels and large-breasted women to do everything the indefatigable 'American way'.

The RazerCPL 2000 on April 14 was by far the biggest games tournament ever held. It was four days long, with more than 300 competitors battling it out for a US\$40,000 grand prize. Our boys flew in alongside competitors from Korea, Australia, France and Russia. Their mission? To win those dollars for Queen and Country. This is their story...



A referee.



"Suck it down. I own you".



"Must... get the... railgun..."



Nb-Fatal1ty.



**“I came, I saw, I
got beat. That’s
the way it goes
sometimes. It’s
part luck, part skill.
I didn’t get the luck.
I’m off to get drunk”**

SUJOY ROY, BRITISH ONLINE GAMING PRO

← Thursday, 9.30am (EST). Day One. We arrive at the Hyatt Regency Hotel in Dallas to find more than 100 competitors lined up outside the 25,000 square foot conference hall. Many have brought their own PCs, air-freighting them from who knows where and puffing through the plush lobby with them as bemused hotel staff and breakfasting oil barons look on. All over, there are battered desktops and shiny new mini-towers, precariously stacked on trolleys or poking out of holdalls.

This is the first time many of these Internet warriors have met face to face. Curiously absent is the online bravado. "Suck it down F***stick - your mom said it tasted good" online becomes "Oh hi, I'm Kevin" in real life. Local rednecks, elephantine geeks, nervy teenagers, bearded oldsters, brash Californians, diffident Brits - all the specimens from the worldwide menagerie that is the online gaming scene - are here. The tournament starts in four hours and they're gagging to warm up.

Melville Archer, 22, has flown in all the way from Pennsylvania to compete. He's nervous. "It's going to be very competitive," he says. "All the best players in the world are here - Makaveli, Fatality, Sujoy, Hakeem"

The hall is split into two areas - a gloriously well-lit tournament arena with 64 pristine Gateway machines lined up for the competitors, and a 'gaming village', a lugubrious campsite where hundreds of players have connected their machines to

huge networks and spend 24 hours a day slaughtering each other on *Quake III* and *Half-Life: Counter-Strike*. In between is a stage area with rows of seats and two huge video walls for people to watch key games. Here and there are Internet broadcasters, camera crews, the sponsors' booths,

Sujoy Roy: thinking about his six figure sponsorship deal.



and, of course, the obligatory well-endowed calendar girls.

A sudden, palpable quiver ripples through the room. Hakeem has appeared. The crowd whisper and point. Thanks to winning the last CPL tourmie, he has been seeded 1st. However, he is unimpressed and somewhat jet-lagged.

"I hate *Quake III*" he spits. "It's a terrible game to use as a tournament game. The levels are basic. The weapons are all far too powerful. Give

me *Quake I* anytime. That was the perfect deathmatch game."

While his partner Sujoy is yet to surface, another British player, Chris Hare (aka Blokey) shuffles in. He fought his way through a qualifier in London to get a place here. Thanks to a good placing in a recent French tournament, the 18-year-old has been seeded 29th. Hurrah. "I'm excited," he says before diving onto IRC to tell his friends.

"Competition games are completely different from fun games. It's down to composure. All of a sudden you've got everything at stake. Imagine making a shot for US\$40,000"

SUJOY ROY, BRITISH ONLINE GAMING PRO

LET THE GAMES BEGIN

Friday, 12:30pm (EST). "DethStalker and Insurrection!" an impatient voice shouts across the Tannoy. "Would you please make your way to the tournament area. Your games commence in 15 minutes."

The seeded players, all 64 of them, are lucky. They don't have to survive the brutal eliminator rounds which occupy most of the first day. Ten players fight a 15 minute free-for-all (on DM6) with only the top four from each game going through. It's tough. Within two hours, more than 100 players have been shaved off the list. Some deal with it, some don't.

Cameron from Washington came here to "kick ass" but found himself knocked out in the first round. "I was very upset. I wanted to find the guys who beat me and er, introduce myself." Another player, John Abbot from Colorado, was more accepting. "I feel great. It was fun - while it lasted. Hakeem? Fatality? I can't even watch those guys play. It's insane. They're too good."

Without pause, after the bloody first round, the remaining 128 players are paired up and start the knock-out one-on-one's, which are 15 minute games on a mutually agreed level. If there's no agreement, the referee rolls a dice and picks a random level. Players are allowed to use their own mice, keyboards, and configs and get 10 to 15 minutes to warm-up.

Sujoy (seeded 23rd) looks on as anxious competitors queue up for their games, smiling knowingly. "Competition games are completely different from fun games," he says, "It's not really skill - it's all down to composure. All of a sudden you've got everything at stake. Imagine making a shot for US\$40,000? That's what Hakeem excels at. He keeps his nerve."

Modest to the last, he won't be drawn on his own chances. "To be

honest, until you get there, it's hard to say. I hope to do well. If I don't I will be disappointed."

Sujoy and Hakeem live and practice together in Stockholm. "He's an interesting character. We are good friends. We used to be in rival teams. We hated each other and slagged each other off. There's still rivalry but he usually beats me in *Quake*. We argue a lot, mainly about what DVDs to watch on our 100in THX projector."

The games continue on in the background. By now the competitors have been culled down to 64. As expected, all the Brits are through. But they will sleep uncomfortably tonight, knowing that the day of reckoning is coming. By the end of tomorrow only eight players will still be standing.

DEADLY DAY THREE

Saturday, 9:37am (EST).

A beautiful morning cracks open over Dallas. Not that anyone notices. The auditorium is lit by the glare of a thousand 17in monitors. The gaming never stopped throughout the night. Those that needed to sleep did so in bags under their PCs or in one of the 990 rooms in the 21 storey hotel.

Today it's 'double elimination'. "Essentially, you get two lives," Sujoy explains. "If you lose, you go into the losers bracket where you have to fight and win twice as many battles to get the same distance. You lose again, you walk."

Sujoy and Hakeem must both play and win four games today to progress. In their first games they triumph - but not effortlessly. They are rattled by the quality of the opposition. "They're supposed to be, like, the worst players, but they're giving us a run for our money," says a worried Hakeem in the hour-long gaps between battles. "We're pretty surprised."

After a shaky start, Blokey scorches through into the last 32, while the unblinking Sujoy effortlessly overcomes his next opponent. Hakeem, however, falters. Getting an unfavourable random level (the sprawling hateful DM13), he loses to the 33rd seed Lantern 20-5 and is shunted unceremoniously into the losers bracket. He has one life left.

It all happens too quickly. In his next game - disaster. He is drawn against his Clan 9 team-mate, Blue, loses control, and is battered 53-11. He's out. A stunned silence falls across the gaming arena.



Groupies lovingly look on as their idols strut their stuff.

"That's just poor," he says, shaking hands with his opponent. "I'm disappointed, but I kinda expected it. Sod's law to get Blue. He's one of the best *Quake II* players and very good with the railgun. He totally owned me. I'm disappointed. I'll practice for the next one."

He hangs around, not sure what to do. "I think I'll bum around. Drink a lot. That's it."

IT'S A FAR, FAR BETTER THING...

Saturday, 14:14pm (EST).

Four hours later and the tension is mounting. The mice are getting sweated. The stakes higher. After two successful battles, Sujoy faces a difficult match. In order to get into the last 12, he must beat fellow Brit Blokey, and, in order to stay in the tournament, Blokey must beat Sujoy.

They agree on DMTourney2, *QIII*'s infamous red level, with just a lightning gun and a rocket launcher as the weapons of any consequence. It is a taut battle, but, in the end, Sujoy's experience triumphs over Blokey's talent, 20-3.

"I know Blokey is better than that," says Sujoy. "I started off well and swept the level. I didn't give him a chance to fight back. That's the way it goes some times."

But didn't you do him any favours, him being British and all?

"No, I didn't did I?", he laughs. "A bit nasty of me. He could have played better than that."

Blokey is unperturbed. "I can relax now. I'm happy. I got a lot further than I expected." That and five all-expenses paid days in Dallas, £500 spending money from Gameplay.com and US\$200 prize money. Nice.

Now Sujoy faces Makaveli, a brash but funny Californian who, along with Fatality, is slated as favourite for the championship. A mere 20 years old, the computer science student (real name: Victor Quadra) is already a veteran of the scene. He missed the *Quake I* revolution "thanks to a 486 and an AOL connection" but claims not to feel nervous.

"I usually don't think about it," he says. "Actually, I generally get more nervous the night before. When I get down here, I don't feel anything. Whatever happens, happens."

All our hopes for a British victory are pinned on Sujoy as he logs into

the battle server. Again they play Tourney2. The battle commences...

In the meantime, the head coach from the Dallas Cowboys appears on screen to talk about gaming. He has some wise words for the crowd.

"In every other sport, you have to be strong or fast to be noticed. In this league you gotta use your mind, your eye, to think. Also, when you play in these games, there's no referee, no cheating. It's up to you."

"I have 125 players on my team. The night before the match I've got 85-90 of them playing these games, not going to bed. This is the future."

Not for Britain it isn't. After a titanic struggle, Sujoy falls to Makaveli (13-8). The British camp are despondent. Sujoy is pragmatic as he pockets his US\$700 prize: "I came, I saw, I got beat. That's the way it goes sometimes. It's part luck, part skill. I didn't get the luck and now I'm off to get drunk."

The tournament carries on, but now, for us, it's just a bunch of saddos playing computer games.

IN THE END

Sunday, 1pm (EST)

The next day saw the play offs for the lower rankings and the battle for the championship.

In the top three were the Korean master, PowerK, Makaveli, and the only player in the tournament who is yet to lose a game -


Fatality. Eventually, after some incredible fights, (see this month's CD), the champions were crowned.

The third placed PowerK said, through his interpreter, that he would like to spend his US\$10,000 prize money on "becoming a better *Quake* player". Runner-up Makaveli, shuffling on stage in his black tasselled leather shoes, planned to spend his cash wisely on "clothes" and "a new Mercedes". The winner Fatality declared he would invest his US\$40,000 in the stockmarket and buy "a garage door opener" for his dad in Kansas City. No one wanted to travel the world or work with children.

"I'd like to thank my girlfriend," he continued, "for letting me play." The three women in the crowd cheered.

Organisers predict that professional video gaming will be worth "billions of dollars" in five years and, already, heavyweight sponsors such as Nike are coming onboard. So it's reassuring to know that, even on the cusp of a new competitive sport, the Great British sporting tradition of losing overseas is being faithfully maintained.

But the boys are defiant. "I want to continue playing games," says Sujoy. "It's going to go more mainstream, big companies are going to get involved. There's never been a better time to get into online gaming."

"Secretly," adds Hakeem, "I'm just really pleased I don't have to get up in the mornings." 

The Hyatt Regency Hotel - its 990 rooms were packed with *Quake* ninjas.



The obligatory 'pointy crystal' trophy.



One of our Great British talents, Blokey.



Poorer gamers bed down under the server.



(From left to right) 3rd placed PowerK, winner Nb-Fatality and runner-up, D16-Makaveli.

MAILBOX



All the letters beginning 'my mouse is knackered' and 'I'm not writing just to blag a mouse, but...' have been unceremoniously dumped. What follows, is the best of the rest

★ ANSWERED BY Chris Anderson

CONTACT INFO

Write to us, and if your letter is selected as Letter Of The Month we'll send you a prize.

WRITE TO Mailbox, PC ZONE, Dennis Publishing, 19 Bolsover Street, London W1P 7HJ

EMAIL letters.pczone@dennis.co.uk

CHAT FORUM If you've got something pressing to say, check out the 'lively' chat forum on our website. Point your browser at www.pczone.co.uk for further info.

SQUARING UP

In response to 'Cool To Be Square', PCZ #89, I feel it somewhat unfair to blame Square Soft for the debacle of *FFVIII* on the PC. As far as I am aware, Square Soft was responsible for only one version of *FFVIII*, the PSX version. Further, I believe that if anyone is to blame for the shoddy PC version then it is Electronic Arts; they distributed all the English versions of the game and most likely had some input in the PC port, regardless of language.

It is almost certain that Square Soft did not have anything whatsoever to do with the PC port, other than providing the dyslexic programmers with the original hi-res movies.

Now, maybe I'm sad, but I own both the PSX and PC version of *FFVIII*, namely because I'm a big Square Soft fan, but there is just one thing that really gets my goat; on the PSX version of the game, there is no mention of the sound, however, on the PC version, the box proudly

boasts and I quote "An epic tale of love, hate, fear and revenge set to a full orchestral soundtrack".

Full orchestral soundtrack on the PC version. Full case speaker twangs and blips set to crap midi would be more accurate. I can't believe that I've got a two grand PC that a lowly PSX puts to shame. Whoever ported *FFVIII* (EA) was obviously solely interested in raking in a quick buck based on the franchise name. And as for the team of porters bragging about DLS (MS DirectX Downloadable Samples, MS software synth, or something) - I say who are they trying to kid? At least when I bought the PC version of *FFVIII*, I could go back to my £60 PSX and play it how it was meant to be played (with music). Don't get me started on the graphics...

L Winkle

★ *FFVIII* was ported to the PC by Square Soft themselves, so they are indeed the ones to blame for the awful music and inexcusably crap interface on the PC version. The

accusations you merrily fling at EA are wrong and misguided (Eidos published *FFVIII* on PC, not EA!), as Square Soft are the ones who seemingly could not be bothered to produce a version specifically for PC, so there are no sinister marketing tactics at work behind the scenes. Happily, this does not detract significantly from what is still a great RPG on PC, let's just hope they give us mouse support and decent music for *Final Fantasy IX*.

SPEECHLESS

I've been staring at the monitor for five minutes now wondering how to start. Should I go down the tried and tested, 'Great mag' route? Maybe you should do a How To... on writing to games mags, or maybe I should have spent more time concentrating on my schoolwork and not on *Trashman* or *Alien8*.

Over the years I've played the field with a multitude of gaming systems and the magazines that go along with

"Saying 'if they're serious about gaming their machines will comply' is laughable... I'm serious, but it's a matter of cost"

PEACHFUZZ'S COST CONCERNS

them. Having reached my later years I've found the one for me and finally settled down. The main reason I subscribed to *PC ZONE* is the overriding feeling I get that it's not written by journalists who play games, but by games players whose passion for the subject have lead them to journalism. Anyway, I digress. My main reason for writing is to respond to several things in PCZ #89.

Daniel Vickers letter to mailbox showed a frightening level of naivety. While I'm happy for him with his 'high spec' machine, as Peter Molyneux noted recently, the majority of home systems are sub-P200 based and by developing titles that are unable to run on these systems developers will find it almost impossible to make a profit. Saying 'if they are serious about gaming their machines will comply' is laughable. I'm serious about gaming, but it's a simple matter of cost. I keep up as best I can, but I can't ever imagine missing a mortgage payment just to get the latest video card. So, as long as the PC's upgradeability is championed, it has to be appreciated that it is also its Achilles Heel. I read recently that over the past year PC games sales have dropped by 20 per cent, while console software sales have continually increased. I wonder how many console owners are people who just decided that it wasn't cost effective to keep throwing money at their PC.

Now, as for A Garrard's pants. People's vanity may well lead them to buy nice pants because they know they will be seen in them. They also know that neighbours will pour scorn on their washing line should a saggy pair of Y-fronts, slightly stained, with a tear along one seam be

SUPER PRIZES TO BE WON

For the next few issues of *PC ZONE*, we will be giving away a Microsoft IntelliMouse to everyone who gets a letter printed in Mailbox. These digital rodents are perfect for 3D shooters and games that require a quick and precise response from your pointing device - you can even use them with Windows 98 if you

really want to. So get your writing skates on and send us your literary masterpieces. We promise not to be rude when we reply to them. Well, not very.



Ⓜ You too can own a Microsoft IntelliMouse. Simply send a vaguely intelligent/interesting letter to Mailbox and, if it gets printed, we'll send you one.



FFVIII: the 'lazy console port' debate continues.

witnessed wafting in the afternoon breeze. If someone described something I did as only fit to be hidden away from public view and smeared against their anal crack, I'd be pretty insulted. Hold on to your Pants.

Finally, Steve Hill's Comment. Does Steve know that when using someone else's words (in this case those of pop guru Half Man Half Biscuit) it is customary to at least place them within quotation marks and desirable to provide a writing credit. I hope it was just an oversight and not a blatant attempt at plagiarism. The article itself read like an attempt to stir up the readership, but lacked any true vitriol.

Peachfuzz

★ We received a mind-boggling number of emails with suggestions for a replacement for the PCZ

“The April cover disc was absolutely brilliant, the extra mods for *Half-Life* have made me a stranger to my wife and children”

MARK EDEY JUST CAN'T SEEM TO GET ENOUGH

Pants logo, see page 97 for the best of them. And Steve's article definitely elicited the desired response from the ZONE readership. In fact, he has been subjected to so much abuse that he suggested his

picture should have featured him sticking his tongue firmly in his cheek. And people say it's Americans who have no sense of irony...

COUNTER CULTURE

First of all I would like to congratulate you on a great mag. After trying all the other gaming mags, yours is the only one I get regularly. The April cover disc was absolutely brilliant, the extra maps and mods for *Half-Life* have made me a stranger to my wife and children. I did find however, after installing the *Counter-Strike* mod and logging on there was only one server using the beta 5 mod, after a bit of head scratching I went to the CS website and upgraded to version 6.1 (21.4 meg). Now all my gaming worries are over (except my wife's hidden



Online gaming will be BIG in your caring sharing PC ZONE from next month.

surely more people will try out the multiplayer side of a game to extend the life of it. A larger online diary section would reflect the habits of the people who play online already and maybe encourage those who have never tried to have a go. Keep up the good work.

Mark Edey, Birmingham

★ Funny you should mention that, we are introducing an online section next issue which will cover all that's hot and all that's not in the world of online gaming. Online news, reviews and regular features will appear, providing a definitive guide to gaming on the Internet.

HANDS OFF HIS PANTS

I would like to take issue with the deviant pant-lover who was the author of May's letter of the month. Not all of us spend a fortune on pants, or worship them for that matter. The more sensible among us realise that pants reside a) under your jeans and, b) next to your smelly bits, and as such are not seen by too many people (apart from your mum or your wife/girlfriend when you chisel them off for washing).

Because of this we (the sussed) tend to leave the purchasing of such garments until the last possible moment

in order to free up our cash for games and go-faster kit.

With regard to the reviews: stick to your Pants (I stick to mine); we all know what it means and where we stand. As for the dog's bollocks! Leave them alone – he's rightfully proud of them (doesn't hide them away in a pair of Calvins, that's for sure), as should we be.

Sean, AKA Bascule (the fule)

★ Er, yes, quite. PCZ



🔗 PC ZONE Pants: most readers say 'hang on to them'.

LETTER OF THE MONTH

A SENIOR SPEAKS

As a subscriber to your excellent magazine, might I reply to a couple of letters featured in the May issue? In answer to Alison Baker's rave against patronising attitudes I would like to add my two pennies worth.

As senior citizens new to computers, my husband and I began sedately with a flight sim and the adventure game *Broken Sword*, as well as using the word processor. Boy, did that soon change, now we are completely hooked on games. Sims, strategy, adventure/role playing and puzzles, you name them, we love them. All very educational and practical we emphasise to everyone, so they don't think we're mad or frittering time away uselessly. No shoot 'em ups for us, at least not until *Half-Life* came along, now we're even fighting each other for PC time.

I usually let patronising attitudes, whether real or imaginary, pass me by as I have more enjoyable things going on in my head. But I must tell you, Alison Baker's letter gave me the biggest derisive chortle of the week. It made me realise just how defensive we

are about our game playing, because we find the raised eyebrows and patronising attitude aimed at our age not our gender. Having said that, why should female computer users have to prove their skill and knowledge by submitting a review? Do you ask male enthusiasts to do the same? Shame on you... and don't say guys don't gripe about this attitude problem. Of course they don't, they are not subjected to it.

On an up note though, with reference to Duncan Fox's unfortunate experience with Gameplay (Watchdog, May issue) I would like to say we have only the highest praise for the excellent service we have received from them. The staff are friendly, helpful and efficient on the phone. We always receive our order the next day (note NO postage and packing charges) unless they are waiting for stocks to come in and they will always try to get unavailable stock. They will exchange/refund items, especially when we used to choose games needing higher specs before we upgraded. What more can you wish for? Stick with Gameplay Duncan, it really is a fantastic firm.

Enough of this keyboard stuff, I'm wasting good Head Crab blasting time.

Kay Newsome

★ Alison was invited to submit a review to us because her letter was well written and we are looking for regular female contributors, not because we wanted her to prove her skill or knowledge. You can read her first review for PC ZONE (*SimCity 3000 World Edition*) on page 80 of this month's issue.



Half-Life, fun for all the family, apparently.

ULTIMA



“WANTS
YOU”

TO JOIN THE BIGGEST ONLINE GAME
IN THE WORLD

LAST WEEK IN ULTIMA ONLINE THERE WERE

5 MARRIAGES

16 THEFTS

41 STREAKERS

12 BEHEADINGS

2 CHICKEN DECAPITATIONS

44 GUILD WARS

1 TAVERN LOTTERY

16 DRAGONS TAMED

1324 SHEEP SHEARED

3100 BOTTLES OF ALE DRUNK

17 GAMES OF CHESS PLAYED

1 HORSE RACE

1 ARCHERY CONTEST

1 BEAUTY CONTEST

4 NEW PLAYER HELPER GUILDS FOUNDED

56 NEW HOUSES - 5 NEW TOWERS - 1 NEW CASTLE

1 NEW GOLDMINE DISCOVERED

56 SEA MONSTERS SURFACED

1 FRUIT SHOP OPENED

17 TREASURE MAPS FOUND

AND THE 187,973rd NEW MEMBER JOINED.



Here we go again...

COMMAND & CONQUER: RED ALERT 2

Red Alert 2? Out later this year? What madness is this? After the fiasco surrounding Westwood Studio's *Tiberian Sun*, we take the executive producer Mark Skaggs to task. Asking the questions: Steve Hill

Following the circus that surrounded the delayed *Tiberian Sun*, it's perhaps understandable that Westwood has kept its cards close to its chest, and the announcement of this sequel came as a surprise to everyone. However, work has been in progress for more than a year and, if current estimates are to be believed, we'll be playing it before Christmas. So, was announcing it at this relatively late stage a deliberate ploy following the saga of *Tiberian Sun*? Never ones to shirk a confrontation, we asked executive producer, Mark Skaggs, who barked: "Not really. We always like a marketing window of about eight months to a year. Of course that has to change when a game slips."

Clearly it does, and *Tiberian Sun* slipped more often than a new-born foal on a frozen lake. But it's *Red Alert* that we're concerned with here and, despite raised eyebrows all round, in retrospect it's a fairly blatant candidate for a sequel. As Mark says: "The idea was pretty obvious when we started it about a year ago. We wanted to capture the essence of *Red Alert 1* and take it a step forward. We started wondering about what the Soviets would be doing after the war and where the next war would be. The idea of a world war being fought on American soil and having the United States call on the allied nations of Europe for rescue was too good to pass up."

🕒 The familiar top-down isometric view will be retained in *Red Alert 2*.



➊ The Statue of Liberty inexplicably comes under attack from a brace of floating dildoes.

"Moving forward, ideas for the wonderful off-beat technologies both the Allies and Soviets would invent just started flowing. Mind-control and psychic warfare were perfect for the Soviets. The United States and the European Allies invented prism technology and a weather control device. Our imaginations ran wild.

"Once we had our design direction, we were excited about the game we knew we could build. It's great when key ideas merge and take on a life of their own. It's as if the game makes itself and your job is to make sure it becomes the game it wants to be."

REASON, REASON

The original was an immensely popular game, and Mark says this was due to a number of reasons. "Some major and some minor, they all combined to make a great game. One, the gameplay is fast and fun, but still deeply strategic. That's a tough balance

to get right. Two, the *Red Alert* world felt real, but altered and interesting. It had exotic technologies, but it was easy to make a connection with the concept of conventional warfare. Three, it had a great personality with the art, voices and sound. It was an inviting place to wage war."

"The idea of a world war being fought on American soil and having the US call on the Allied nations of Europe for rescue was too good to pass up"

Clearly the RTS genre has been flooded since the original *Red Alert*? So does the name still carry a lot of weight? Mark thinks so.

"Absolutely. *Red Alert* is one of the best selling games ever played, and it's still quite popular. More

than 140,000 games of *Red Alert* are played every month on Westwood Online."

The genre has become a lot more sophisticated over the last few years. Mark claims this will be reflected in *Red Alert 2*.

"We'll show this in a couple of important ways. First of all we're creating a huge variety of units with multiple purposes, which leads to a huge array of tactics. We stayed away from creating 'mirrored unit' lists where each side had basically the same units with different colours.

"Next, we're balancing the game 'high'. With this roller coaster style of gameplay, at any moment, you could be one step away from an amazing victory or a crushing defeat. One way to easily see this philosophy is that super weapons like the nuke or the Allied Weather Control Machine do a tremendous amount of damage when you fire them off at your enemy."

THE DETAILS

DEVELOPER Westwood Studios

PUBLISHER Electronic Arts

WEBSITE www.westwood.com

OUT November 2000

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

- ★ Er, *Red Alert* ring any bells?
- ★ Sequel to an immensely popular game
- ★ *Tib Sun* got a lot of stick
- ★ It's out this year – allegedly

CV

Westwood
STUDIOS

WESTWOOD STUDIOS

A Brief History of *C&C*. Not that Westwood have never done anything else

1995 *Command & Conquer*

1996 *C&C: Red Alert*

1999 *C&C: Tiberian Sun*

2000 *Tiberian Sun: Firestorm*

Where would the *Command & Conquer* series be without a bit of frozen Tundra?



Q&A

MARK SCAGGS



The executive producer of Red Alert 2 gives us some chat

PCZ What is the first game you ever played?

MARK If you mean the first video game, it was *Space Wars*, which was one of the first ever made. It was the only video game at the pinball arcade I liked going to.

PCZ What is your favourite ever game?

MARK This is going to sound like PR spin but, believe it or not, my favourite PC game is *Red Alert*. My favourite arcade game is *Defender*.

PCZ What's the last game you paid good money for?

MARK I usually buy all of the top games when they first come out. I'm not sure of the last one that I purchased.

PCZ Have you ever had a fight? What happened?

MARK Sure have. When I was growing up, I had a fight every year from the 1st grade until the 7th grade and then one last one when I was a senior in High School. There always seemed to be a bully around that liked to torment the smart kids. Boy did they get a surprise when they ran into me!



The Eiffel Tower as lightning emitting defensive unit. Interesting.



"Finally, we're making the interface more powerful, yet easier to use. We've switched to a tab interface for unit creation and have added the advanced command bar to bring some of the more complex interface elements to the surface."

2D OR NOT 2D?

Interesting stuff, but the fact remains that *Red Alert 2* will still maintain the traditional 2D top-down view. Correct?

"We won't be dabbling in 3D this time. In general, we use technology to support great gameplay. Rather than just throw '3D' at RA2, we knew we could make the great game we wanted, with the style of art we wanted, using the top down (really a bit of an angle) point of view. As a side note, there are some key technical limitations to not going 3D at this time.

"We wanted to have a game that had a large number of good-looking units on the screen, while at the same time having a very rich and filled landscape. Right now, this isn't possible in 3D with anything but the highest spec machines. We didn't want to turn RA2 into a 'squad based' game due to polygon limitations. Additionally, we want as many people as possible to be able to enjoy RA2, so we're putting gameplay as the first priority and technology that needs the best and fastest machines as second priority."

Much like *Tiberian Sun* which, while a perfectly playable game, was labelled by cynics as no more than a hi-res C&C. An accusation that could feasibly be levelled at *Red Alert 2*? Mark thinks not.

"I doubt it, but there will always be detractors. If cynics weren't cynical what else would they have to do? In fact, the original *Red Alert* had a few critics, and it still went on to be one of the most popular games ever created."



WELCOME TO THE REAL WORLD

As the surrounding pictures would appear to confirm, much of the action in *Red Alert 2* will take place in a variety of key locations around the world, featuring lots of recognisable landmarks and buildings. So where does *Red Alert 2* sit in the C&C universe?

Mark explains: "When Einstein went back in time, he changed history and split the timelines from the C&C universe. If we were to set the two timelines side by side, we'd see that RA2 is a bit earlier still than the original C&C, but again definitely on a diverging path."

Despite the disparate locations on view, the majority of the missions will actually be confined to the United States, and there will be

12 for each side. More crucially, will the gameplay differ from the original? Mark? "RA2 will play a lot like the original - fast paced and full of action. There

will, however, be a number of key differences that are a result of changes to our interface and choice of units and tactics.

"Besides balancing the game 'high' as I described earlier, we've created a number of units that, when used in combination with others, gives you deeper gameplay and cooler tactics. Take the tesla trooper for instance. This infantry unit carries a tesla gun which he uses to zap enemy units. Now if you take three tesla troopers and fire on your own tesla coil, they charge up the tesla coil so that it fires farther and, even more interestingly, it fires when the power to your base is knocked out! This is just one example, there are many more.

"Next, we've introduced the concept of 'neutral tech' buildings that offer players something special if they take them over. Taking over an airport for example gives you the ability to drop paratroopers. Taking over an oil rig means that you'll get a constant trickle of money without having to send out your Ore Trucks. At the start of each game, we see players scouting the map to find and take over these buildings to get the 'tech' advantage these offer. Of course, you could also destroy these buildings if you wanted to keep them out of the hands of your enemy.

"Another cool feature is the ability of regular infantry to garrison inside a building. Because a number of the battles will take place in city settings, this allows players to create defensible 'choke' points which can alter the way that the battle progresses.

"Unit experience and veterancy is another important change we've added. We're going to



WHAT'S THE STORY?

Red Alert 2's executive producer tells us a tale...

"The game takes place a number of years after the original. The Soviets lost the first war and now they and the allied nation of Europe are rebuilding. The United States has entered a new era of prosperity and announces that it will take the role of leading the world into a future of freedom, peace and democracy. This doesn't sit too well with Romanov, the newly elected leader of the Soviet Union, so he hatches a secret plan. While the rest of the world is rebuilding, Romanov begins rebuilding the Soviet Union in a different and more sinister way. You see,

he creates secret bases around the world where he continues to build new machines of war. He creates the Dreadnought warship to add to the Soviet navy. He creates the Kirov Heavy Bomber to add to their air force. His scientists delight in studying mind control and psychic warfare. Finally to make sure that he has troops to man these war machines and the battle field, he creates cloning technology. Once the final bits of new technology come online, Romanov places mind-controlled Soviet operatives in key military and government installations across the US. Then when the time is right, he gives the signal and launches the invasion of the United States, plunging the world into war once again."



Command & Conquer: Red Alert 2. If nothing else, there's certainly a lot going on.

deliver on the promise of veterancy by making it easier to become an elite veteran unit and by making it beneficial to have veteran units completely obvious and useful. For example, when your V3 rockets become elite, they fire 'mini-nukes.' When Kirov Airships become elite, they drop 'tesla bombs' instead of conventional bombs. These are just a couple of examples. One of the great things about the *Red Alert* universe is that you can play with those alternative technologies from history that never really took root.

“The hardest part is to stay true to the original, maintain whatever magic made it special and still add things to make it an experience”

“Additionally, we're working on eliminating 'cheesy' rushes. A 'cheesy' rush is where, two minutes into the game, a set of infantry come into your base and eliminate your Construction Yard, thus basically ending the game. The new tab interface helps this because it allows you to build units, vehicles, defence structures and buildings in parallel to one another. This way you can get some defences up quickly.”

Are there going to be a load of FMV cut-scenes? What actors can we expect to see?

“Absolutely. We've got a great script and we're set to start filming in late May. There won't be any huge stars, but you will definitely recognise some of

their faces from TV and movies.”

TERRY BERRY

It sounds as if they know what they're doing then, but there must be some pitfalls to making a sequel to such a successful game. Mark?

“I think the toughest thing is to stay true to the original game, maintain whatever magic made it special, and still add all the things you want to add so that it becomes a new experience.”

Nicely put, but surely the C&C label is a licence to print money. Why does it have such an enduring appeal?

“There are probably many reasons, but the one that might be the most important is the game dynamic that Brett Sperry was devoted to when he first started building real-time strategy games. He was driven to create games that were wide, in that they were both accessible and easy to learn, yet deep, in that there were always new strategies and tactics to explore. All of the C&C games have that,” says Mark.

So what do you think will be the best thing of all about *Red Alert 2*? “Everyone will have a different



Red Alert has never claimed to be a war documentary, and mixes conventional weaponry with exotic technologies.

answer for this. Personally, I love the fact that every time you sit down to play, you find new tactics to explore and new ways to use the units. It's very hard to stop playing when you're constantly thinking, 'I'd like to try just one more thing.'

“We're playing the game every day and it's a blast. We look forward to releasing it so that everyone can see it and have the same fun that we're having right now.”

That's very generous of you, but will it really come out in October?

“We're looking at Fall.”

Sorry, we don't have that in the UK. **EE**

Let's get dirty, it's...

COLIN MCRÆ RALLY 2.0



This is mud wrestling as it should be. *Keith Pullin* takes a peek at the filthiest sequel ever

UPDATE

THE DETAILS

DEVELOPER Codemasters
PUBLISHER Codemasters
WEBSITE www.codemasters.com
OUT Late summer

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

- ★ Sequel to the best rally game ever
- ★ Fantastic new game engine
- ★ Excellent multiplayer options as well as a single-player championship season
- ★ Absolutely stunning 32-bit landscapes with accurate topography
- ★ Totally realistic headcam view
- ★ Real-time changing weather

The original *Colin McRae Rally* stormed to number one in 27 different countries, sold more than one and a quarter million copies in Europe alone, and won more than 50 international awards. To this day it remains *the* rally game for the PC. Let's face it, there's only one way this game was ever going to be ousted, and that was by its sequel.

Colin McRae Rally 2.0 is currently being fine-tuned by a team of 40 pampered programmers (most of whom worked on the original game) at Codemasters' luxurious Warwickshire hideaway. Disregarding the standard bolt-on extras so worryingly prevalent in sequels these days, Codemasters has opted instead



Four cars thrash it out in the highly entertaining Arcade mode.



Along with changing weather there are night and day races.

to strip down the original engine, build a brand new all singing, all dancing, slap you around the face, state-of-the-art 3D engine, and go from there. And what a good choice it appears to be.

DRIVE ME CRAZY

The new combined physics and damage engine not only allows spoilers to crack, rear bumpers to drag along the ground and windscreens to shatter, but it also incorporates damage into the way the

car handles. So, if your tactics in the first game were based upon 100mph pinball through the trees, you may as well get out of the car now, because the realism in *CMR2* is going to kill you.

The new camera angles are pretty deadly too. Along with a host of television views and replays, one of the more thrilling ways to enjoy the game will be through the in-car driver headcam, which, with its constant jogging, simulates the neck-jarring punishment a real rally driver foolishly endures.

Other aesthetic wizardry in the game-engine department includes massively improved car textures with light-sourced reflections (just look at the screenshots!), McRae's new Ford Focus looks almost good enough to eat. Amazingly, these dedicated developers have also modelled accurate textures for the other 11 cars currently taking part in the World Rally Championship. Oh, and each car handles differently. Would you expect any less?

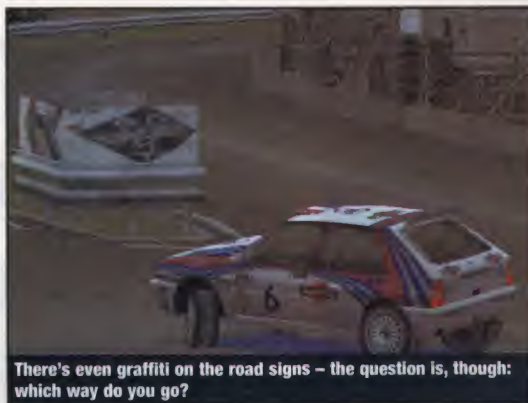
The fancy makeover is not restricted to the cars either. Outside



It's raining now, but it could all change in a flash.



Colin McRae Rally 2.0 features some of the most detailed roadside objects you've ever seen.



There's even graffiti on the road signs – the question is, though: which way do you go?

Q&A

GUY WILDAY



Colin McRae Rally 2.0's producer, Guy Wilday, prefers bikes to cars. Are you sure you've got the right job mate?

PCZ What car do you own?

GUY I prefer two wheels these days and tend to stick to my bike, a Ducati Super Sport. Much like McRae – he races Superbikes – I think he had about ten at the last count.

PCZ So, have you ever taken it for a quick 100mph spin through the snow and ice of the Welsh mountains?

GUY Not the Ducati, no – mainly because last time I was in the Welsh mountains in the snow I ending up ploughing straight into the back of a massive truck. Steep downhill roads, combined with snow on ice, tyres packed with snow and a trundling truck are not a good combination.

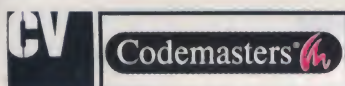
PCZ If you were going to enter a rally, who would you choose as your celebrity navigator, and why?

GUY To race properly it would have to be Nicky Grist – Colin's real-life co-driver, whose voice you hear as the navigator in the game itself.

PCZ When was the last time Colin McRae won a race?

GUY At the time of writing, April 2, when he and Nicky won Spain's Catalunya Rally; and it's looking good for Argentina.

PCZ Hey, just testing your rally knowledge...



CODEMASTERS

Codemasters made its name by cornering the budget market way back in the mid-'80s. After record profits last year it established a new development centre, boasting tennis courts and free roaming farmyard animals. All this to enhance the creative ambience – and it seems to work.

1997 TOCA Touring Car – Highly acclaimed touring car racer.

1998 Jonah Lomu Rugby – One of the only rugby games around that's actually playable.

1998 Colin McRae Rally – The best rally game in existence.

1998 Brian Lara Cricket – Probably the best cricket game ever made.

1999 Micro Machines V3 – Incredibly addictive racer that's maybe not as good as earlier versions.

1999 TOCA Touring Car 2 – Graphically resplendent racing game.

2000 Colin McRae Rally 2.0 – Better than sex?

the vehicle, the 32-bit textured landscape looks equally sexy. Dozens of stunning topographically correct stages span eight different countries, ranging from the UK to Finland to Australia. These dramatic, obstacle strewn courses even boast randomly generated, real-time weather conditions, including snow, ice, rain, fog, mud rivers and even the odd bit of sunshine. The whole weather algorithm has been designed so players will never experience the same weather conditions twice on the same track. Which is hardly realistic, considering it pisses down constantly in Britain anyway. But, who are we to stand in the way of extravagant virtual weather systems?

Obviously, to change some things would be sacrilege and so the in-game coaching from Colin McRae and in-car commentary from co-driver Nicky Grist remains. They've learned some more jargon since we last heard them though; so prepare to be well and truly shouted at.

SIX OF THE BEST

Aware that driving games often live or die by their replayability value alone,

“Arcade mode pits six cars against each other over eight multiplayer-only looped circuits. Forget car set-up here; just go hell for leather and see who wins”

it's the multiplayer aspect in *CMR2* that has received the biggest overhaul. LAN and Internet options will be available, of course, yet on top of this there are other areas to explore. Firstly, there's the all-new Arcade mode, which pits six cars against each other over eight multiplayer-only looped

circuits. You can forget car set-up or any other technical aspects here; just go hell for leather and see who wins.

Another mode imaginatively titled Rally Challenge allows two players to go against each other on the same track using a split-screen. The single-player game doesn't take a back seat though, and remains as engrossing as ever. For those with stamina, there's the full World Championship to take part in. If that's not your style, there's plenty of one-off races or time trial modes against McRae's ghost car. The rally school featured in the first game should also remain; although Codemasters isn't entirely sure what form it will take. More lessons? Less lessons? We just don't know.

What we do know is that *CMR2* is due for release this summer. So, brush up on your map reading skills and get ready to navigate your way out of your bedroom to buy it. **PCZ**



Expect the most ridiculous weather conditions you've ever encountered.



Decisions, decisions.



I may have had a few pints, but that guy's legless.



A scientist misunderstands the meaning of the deep throat technique.

Are you prepared to be scared once more?

DINO CRISIS

Open the door, get on the floor, everybody shoot a dinosaur – in the face, sings **James Lyon**

THE DETAILS

DEVELOPER Capcom
PUBLISHER Virgin Interactive
WEBSITE www.capcom.com
OUT Anytime now

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

- From the makers of *Resident Evil*
- Movie-like quality
- Bowls of atmosphere and suspense
- It's got dinosaurs in it. Right!

With a name like that I diKNOWsaur that it's going to TriceraTOPs the charts! Oh dear. Poor dinosaur puns aside, Capcom looks as if it could be onto another winner in the survival horror genre. After shuffling hungrily towards the juicy brains of a sure-fire hit with *Resident Evil*, this time it's trying something different to keep the format fresh. And with rotting zombie corpses to its name, that isn't going to be too difficult. *Dino Crisis* was a hit on the PlayStation last year and

there's no reason why it shouldn't do just as well when released on the PC.

JURASSIC PARK 3?

Dinosaurs have been big sellers in the past, with Steven Spielberg's special effects extravaganza starting the trend, and while the hype is only just dying down, we're sure you're just as excited by them as you were when they first popped their CGI heads out of the *ET* director's beard. In *Dino Crisis* you play red-haired Regina, participating in a mission to infiltrate an island base to find Dr Kirk, a man once thought dead. Only there's a little bit of a problem; a problem that's massacred almost everyone on the island. It isn't long before you comes across it – dinosaurs! Although with a name like *Dino Crisis*, this is rather obvious (unless you thought this was a Dean Martin simulator). From then on it's survival horror ahoj as you attempt to take control of the situation and try to find an escape route – while blasting your way through loads of prehistoric monsters, of course.

Anyone who's played *Resident Evil* will know what to expect. It's another foray into third-person action adventure with a handful of puzzles mixed in with the gunplay. This time though, Capcom has added a few improvements. Where *RE* had static backgrounds, *Dino Crisis* features polygon backgrounds, which sometimes move as you walk. Despite the loss of detail it looks strangely appealing. Even more useful is the

habit of appearing when you least expect it, or even following you into certain rooms. Any damage done to Regina can result in spillage of blood, which may attract them to your position if not stemmed.

Velociraptors – the ones nobody had ever heard of before *Jurassic Park* – take their rightful place as the main cannon fodder, but expect guest appearances by other species. You can also count on the obligatory cameo by

“To keep the tension high, ammo is scarce and the dinosaurs are abundant. It's good then that you can shoot them with tranquillisers to put them to sleep”

fact that, by pressing a button, Regina can turn 180 degrees instantaneously. A good thing, considering the increased agility of the dinosaurs.

Where zombies are slow, single-minded and stupid, dinosaurs are fast, single-minded and slightly less stupid. You won't have much chance to react before they're gouging your stomach as they pin you to the ground. What's more, they have a

the old Tyrannosaurus Rex. To keep the tension high, ammo is scarce and the dinosaurs are abundant. It's good then that you can also shoot them up with tranquillisers to put them to sleep for a short time, and several lasers can hinder the progress of the enemy with ease.

Aiding you in your quest are two others: a moody chap called (ha ha) Gale, and Rick, an eager type with a



This is the only language that dinosaurs understand.



That stain will be hell to shift.



Regina gets a much-needed lift.



And we didn't mention *Alone In The Dark* once...



The backgrounds move instead of staying static.



A soon-to-be-extinct dinosaur's eye view of our heroine.

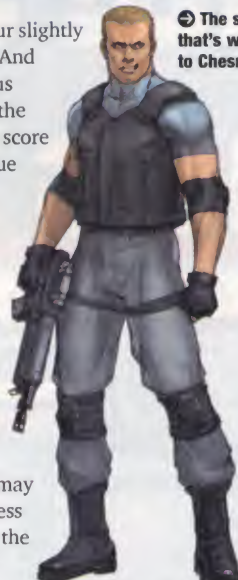
hideous haircut. Expect both to provide the incentive for various cut-scenes of almost movie-like quality, which at least add to the atmosphere. And atmosphere is one thing *Dino Crisis* has in its favour. The thought of not knowing what lurks around the next corner, and only having a few bullets left, might just bring a hint of excitement into our insignificant lives. What with its plot, set-pieces, and diverse camera angles, could *Dino Crisis* be the natural evolution of the interactive movie into something more suited to the discerning gamer? Who knows?

FOR THOSE WHO DON'T OWN A PLAYSTATION...

Well, we've had to wait this long for *Dino Crisis* to appear on the PC, so don't we deserve some additions to complement our unwavering patience? Let's see, hmm? Ah, improved graphics and sound. That's a given. What else? Hopefully, the PlayStation's door-opening sequences

can be cut or reduced for our slightly more powerful computers. And maybe there are a few bonus games. Any more? Oh yes, the ability to register your high score online in a worldwide league table, so you can compare it against other hardened *Dino Crisis* players.

Hey, whatever it adds, we're still aroused by the chance of facing up to some foes that put up a good fight. *Dino Crisis* has been happily selling itself to more than a million punters in its PlayStation format and the PC version may shift quite a few more. I guess we'll just have to wait until the final version lands to see if it's worth all the fuss. [M]



The scientist (so that's what happened to Chesney Hawkes).



A fellow team member.



PETER JONES

Virgin's head of publishing and Capcom liaison rips into our juicy little questions with all the enthusiasm of a *Tyrannosaurus-Rex* who's just come off a starvation diet

PCZ Does Capcom see the PC as an afterthought?

PJ Capcom has always primarily developed for the consoles, as this is related to its arcade roots. It has only been relatively recently that the PC was really able to compete graphically with the consoles, and Capcom now sees the value of creating its products on the PC as well. It is more a case of careful planning than afterthought. Capcom is also a developer that will only do the best job it possibly can on its products, and as such it would not want to let everyone down with shoddy products.

PCZ What do you think of the X-Box?

PJ Very interesting. It's a while off yet and the specification will change, I expect, up to its release to keep it competitive, but at the end of the day it is the quality and availability of the software that generally makes or breaks new hardware. Let's wait and see.

PCZ How about a *Resident Evil* *Dino Crisis* crossover?

PJ That seems highly unlikely. T-Rex Vs Zombie would be like Lennox Lewis Vs Ronnie Corbett. No contest.

PCZ If the dinosaurs rose up and decided to sue for maltreatment, what would your defence be?

PJ I'd say "OI DINOSAUR, NO!" (Peter then goes on to do a very poor Harry Enfield impression, which we'll spare you from reading).

EXTINCTION SHOULD BE PERMANENT

There's no doubt that we all love dinosaurs. We also love to kill dinosaurs. So do the game developers it seems. Here's a few of their appearances in no particular order

Tomb Raider – There you are, nonchalantly walking through a lost valley when, what do you know? Out pops a T-Rex and you've suddenly added a couple of extra pounds to your shorts. Luckily, Lara's got the right idea for revenge: shoot the big fool in his tiny brain. Ragh!

Turok: Dinosaur Hunter – This obviously features one or two. Turok's a man after our own heart, or rather a man after the extermination of all the filthy dinosaurs. Mr Turok thinks nothing of pointing a particle accelerator up a dinosaur's arse and pulling the trigger. Ragh!

Jurassic Park: Trespasser – Had a real physics model, yet included a controllable arm that didn't seem to apply to any laws of the aforementioned, and even more dinosaurs. Although, most men didn't see any since they were too busy looking down at their character's breasts. Er, ragh!



CAPCOM

Despite being a console game developer, it occasionally decides to grace the PC with its presence.

1996 *StreetFighter II*

1997 *Super StreetFighter II Turbo*

1997 *Super Puzzle Fighter II Turbo*

1997 *Resident Evil*

1998 *StreetFighter Alpha*

1999 *StreetFighter Alpha II*

1999 *Resident Evil 2*



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POOL OF RADIANCE II: RUINS OF MYTH DRANOR

You wait 12 years for a sequel... but then something special turns up. *Dave Woods* polishes his dice

THE DETAILS

DEVELOPER Stormfront Studios
PUBLISHER Mattel
WEBSITE www.poolofradiance.com
OUT Winter 2000

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

- ★ It's the first PC RPG based on 3rd Edition rules
- ★ Brand new engine with interactive environments
- ★ Non-linear quests
- ★ Advanced multiplayer options

If you can remember the first *Pool Of Radiance* game, you're either very old, very dedicated or very sad. It was released way back in 1988 and it was the first computer game to be based on TSR's advanced D&D ruleset. Now, 12 years later, the D&D role-playing genre has been reinvigorated, thanks mainly to sublime titles such as *System Shock 2* and *Baldur's Gate*. So, what better time to release the sequel, subtitled *Ruins Of Myth Dranor*?

Developer, Stormfront Studios, is also proudly claiming another first with its new release. It's going to be

FIRST ENCOUNTER

the first role-playing game based on the new 3rd Edition rulebook, a feat that *Baldur's Gate II* can't boast. This means that as well as the new classes and races, your characters can progress up to the 16th level and cast 8th level spells. You can also expect to be terrorised by some brand new monsters, sporting the snappy 3rd Edition look currently popular on Paris catwalks.

But what of the story? Well, apparently something bad is messing with the original *Pool Of Radiance*. You're sent to protect the Pool site, but you haven't been there a minute before a portal opens, sweeping you into the uncompromising world of Myth Dranor. This is one of the most dangerous places in the Forgotten

Realms, but the gameworld has been crafted to enable your first-level characters to progress quickly. Loads of sub-quests are available to help you progress, but many of these aren't necessary to progression in the actual game.

If you're playing by yourself your party can be made up of a maximum of six characters - two of these are non-player characters. In the multiplayer game, which promises to be more action-orientated than solo play, you

The game is played from the traditional three-quarter isometric viewpoint, with 2D pre-rendered backgrounds and 3D characters and spell effects laid over the top. We are pleased to report that a lot of the game environments are fully interactive, which means you can block a door to stop something nasty getting through and smash crates and climb on tables to get a combat advantage. In short, you can expect a much more natural feel to the gaming world.

We've just had a sneak peek at the latest code, and you'll be pleased

“The animation system and huge characters make it one of the smoothest role-playing games we have ever seen, and the 3rd Edition rulebook should keep purists happy”

can play with up to five others and take a character each, or split your party however you like. If you want, you can play with a mate and take three each, or take five for yourself and leave your friend with just one. The choice is yours.

As you can see from the screenshots, *PoR II* is looking absolutely stunning.

to know that we reckon *PoR II* is going to be something special. The new animation system and huge characters make it one of the smoothest role-playing games we have ever seen, and the pull of the 3rd Edition rulebook should keep purists happy. Watch this space for more information. **[PW]**



The perfect setting for a party.



Expect to see some brand new monsters.



Use the 3D landscape to your advantage.



It has 3rd Edition rules and everything!



Oi, get your bloody shoes off. We've been on our hands and knees for ages polishing this floor.



This is the machine where you store all your energy, which you use in everything you do.



Warrior aliens, hippy aliens, scientists, slobs – everything you could possibly hope for.



Here we can see some beautiful toilets and sleeping booths. But you can have art galleries too, you know.



Space Oddity is requested for the 200th time at the local rave.



The screenshots don't do the game justice. You should see it through the brilliant 3D camera.

FIRST ENCOUNTER

STARTOPIA

The theme is space, the object is fun. **Mark Hill** gets stars in his eyes

THE DETAILS

DEVELOPER Mucky Foot
PUBLISHER Eidos Interactive
WEBSITE www.muckyfoot.com
OUT November 2000

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

- ★ To say this is *Theme Hospital* in space is unfair, *Startopia* has masses of depth
- ★ Wide appeal with quite a few winks towards sci-fi buffs
- ★ Genuinely funny
- ★ Incredible graphics and an intuitive interface that make it a pure PC, non-console game

Previously known as *Space Station: Utopia*, this is Mucky Foot's second game after the slightly disappointing *Urban Chaos*. It's also the game that might just put them on the map with the big boys. Made up largely of ex-Bullfrog members, the team is ready to accept the inevitable pigeonholing comparisons with titles such as *Theme Park* and *Theme Hospital*, but they're also quick to point out that they're taking the concept of these games to unprecedented heights.

Your job in *Startopia* is to build, manage and expand an allocated

section of a space station, which becomes populated by all manner of alien creatures. The detail of each of the alien characters' lives is immense. These are sentient beings that need to eat, have a good time, fall in love, go to the toilet and have sex (although not necessarily in that order). Unlike *The Sims*, however, you won't get bogged down in the boring minutiae of common daily life.

The game's currency is energy, which is sent out in vibes, thoughts and even excrement by the station's inhabitants. The happier they are and the better you are able to balance the needs of each individual creature, the more energy will be added to your coffers.

Diplomacy and trade with the outside world play a part, as does the traditional *Theme* gameplay that brought Bullfrog so much success

in the past. Being able to manage this micro-society of multicultural and diverse species gives *Startopia* a depth we've not encountered in this type of game before. You can expect the usual research and personnel management (you recruit directly from the population) along with more unusual confrontations with space pirates or Jabba the Hut look-alikes, who will try to make you run the station just the way they like it. You can even battle with other parts of the station as you expand through the missions.

Each section of the station has three levels, one of them being an environmental bio dome, where you can recreate the original habitat of the predominant race in your alien hotel complex. We should point out that the way you manage the station will affect what type of aliens who come to live there, which in

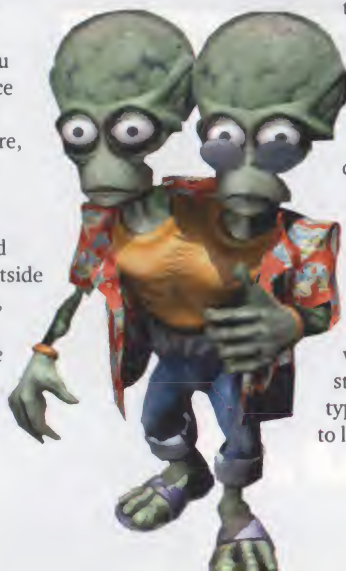
turn will affect every other facet of daily life.

The developers' love of sci-fi really comes through in the way different missions echo classic scenes from

"You can expect confrontations with Jabba the Hut lookalikes, who will try to make you run the station just the way they like it"

famous, and sometimes obscure, sci-fi fiction. While watching the demo, we were reminded of the giant ships in Iain M Banks's *Culture* novels – they have the same variety of life and odd social situations – with more than a splash of Douglas Adams' galactic humour.

Gary Carr, who was lead artist on *Theme Hospital* (as well as *Powermonger* and *Populous 2*), felt that the NHS send-up in that game wasn't understood properly by the European and American market. But *Startopia* looks a dead cert to have a more universal appeal and hopefully be an even greater success. **EW**





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GENIUS AT PLAY



Split into regions, generals will have to think carefully about supply lines.



Real-time day and night cycles should mean plenty of night raids.



'But I always have to drive the truck. It's not fair!'



It doesn't look good for this tank commander.



Some online gamers have already organised squadrons.

WORLD WAR II ONLINE

FIRST ENCOUNTER

THE DETAILS

DEVELOPER Cornered Rat Software
PUBLISHER None. *WWII Online* will be a free download with a flat monthly fee
WEBSITE www.wwiionline.net
OUT Officially October, but likely to be later

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

- ★ It's total online war
- ★ Something for everyone
- ★ Up to 1,000 people in each arena
- ★ Ascend the ranks and affect the outcome of the war

Imagine an online fighting game where as well as being able to be a World War II soldier on either the Allied or Axis side, you can play in any role you like – from piloting a fighter, transport plane or bomber to captaining a spearhead of tanks or battleships, or directing a beachhead landing. All this you'd have thought would only be possible from a top-down view, but it appears that what we thought was years away, could be just a few months away, perhaps even before *Team Fortress 2*.

"We shall fight on the beaches. We shall fight on the landing grounds. We shall fight in the fields, and in the streets, we shall fight in the hills. We shall never surrender." *Richie Shoemaker* gets carried away, again

Currently nearing the beta stage in development, *WWII Online* is being coded by Cornered Rat Software, who, apart from online flight sim fans, not many will have heard of. Formerly of Interactive Magic and responsible for the popular *Warbirds* and *Dawn Of Aces* series of games, Cornered Rat saw that people were dreaming of online battles of this type and decided to follow the idea through.

In essence, and hopefully in the end, *WWII Online* will have something for everyone. First-person action fans will be able to happily join up and fight *Quake*-style. Simulation fans can hop into tanks, planes or boats and bomb, strafe or pound the enemy into submission. Driving fans can race about in a jeep, perhaps even ferry some GIs to the front line and if you're into your RPGs, you can play all day every day and ascend through the ranks to command a squad of human cannon fodder of your own. As a concept it is as simple as you'll find, and with more than 1,000 players in each 'region' – the outcomes in each affecting the others – it has the potential to be the biggest online game ever.

As with all online games, *WWII Online* will constantly evolve, but in its first incarnation will be set in France in 1940. You'll be able to team up or go solo for the country of your choice (you'll have to start from scratch if you want to defect), and the higher the rank you are, the more responsibilities you will have. At this stage we don't know whether you'll have some control over your human squadmates, but in terms of resources – which are determined by the AI – you'll be able to

– unless equipped with bazookas or daring enough with a hand grenade – will have little chance of stopping a troop of panzers. Similarly, as a tank commander, it would be wise to find some trees to hide under if you hear the drone of aircraft above the squeal of your tracks. However, with each arm of the services interconnected and human generals dictating the play, don't be surprised if after blowing up an enemy fuel dump, you're sent off to rescue a downed

"As a concept it is as simple as you'll find, and with more than 1,000 players in each region it has the potential to be the biggest online game ever"

distribute weapons, ammo or call for fire support from armour or aircraft. Reach the high echelons of command and you may even affect the production of your country. More importantly, the more stripes or stars on your uniform, the better equipment you'll have access to, and as the war progresses, new vehicles will be made available. As a German pilot for instance, don't expect to be flying jets until 1945.

Historical accuracy will, of course, play a vital role in gameplay. Infantry

pilot, unfamiliar with running around in first-person.

There is quite literally a ton of information on *WWII Online* out there, more than would fill this entire magazine. But if, like us, you remain sceptical about whether the developers can pull it off, we'd suggest you check it out (www.hq.wwiionline.com is a top fansite). If anyone can pull off as ambitious a game as this though, it's these guys. *WWII Online* may just be gaming's finest hour. [E]



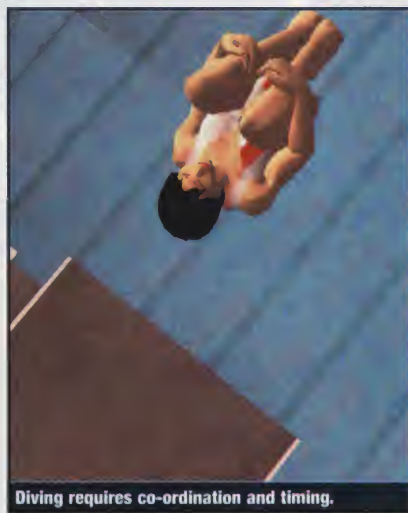
Smile for the camera.



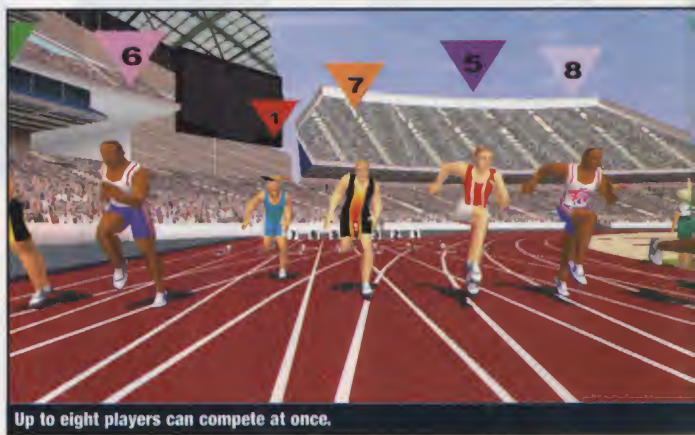
The one legged hop, a relatively unknown Olympic event.



Your athletes' physiques will improve with training.



Diving requires co-ordination and timing.



Up to eight players can compete at once.

FIRST ENCOUNTER

SYDNEY 2000

Martin Korda thought he was going to Australia to write this preview. Ha, the fool

THE DETAILS

DEVELOPER Attention To Detail
PUBLISHER Eidos
WEBSITE www.eidos.com
OUT August 2000

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

- Management elements as well as arcade action
- Includes 12 Olympic events
- Eight-player multiplayer option
- Keypad skill and speed required
- No daily tests for illegal substances

What better place to stage the Olympics than Australia, a country where, if you believe the stereotypes, the sun always shines, the beer flows freely and people are happy and healthy.

It seems to be the perfect venue for staging the games, although you'd have to be rich enough to be able to take a month off work. We're not, and we're damned if we're going to stay up until the wee hours to watch some muscular he-woman throwing hammers across the park. But we haven't given up on the event entirely. Oh no. Thanks to Eidos and English based development team Attention

To Detail, we're actually going to be taking part.

Due for release in August, *Sydney 2000* will feature three distinct modes of play, which are set to transform this type of game from a keyboard-breaking nightmare into a more tactical simulation. Olympic mode is the most impressive and gives you a set of 12 athletes specialising in different events. You have to train them up, make sure they qualify for their disciplines and build them up in your own virtual gym.

If you qualify for the actual Olympics you can take part in the 100m sprint, 110m hurdles, hammer, javelin, triple jump,

high jump, 100m freestyle swimming, sprint cycling, skeet shooting, weightlifting, diving and kayak racing. To win gold you'll have to master special keypad skills, such as navigating through rapids in the kayaking, ensuring you make jumps with your leading leg in the 110m hurdles and mastering co-ordination and timing in the diving. The actual method of control is still being tweaked, but old-timers can take heart that some degree of keyboard pounding will be necessary.

Taking part with others, of course. And *S2000* will cater for loads of lads and their beer by offering an eight-player mode, where you can compete in any of the 12 events with real or imaginary friends. All-in-all it sounds as if there's going to be something for everyone.

In order to cater for the 32 countries taking part in the Games, Attention To Detail is providing unique models for each nation. What's more, it's making sure that every location used in the Olympics is accurately recreated, by utilising the actual

“S2000 will cater for loads of lads and their beer by offering an eight-player mode, where you can compete in any of the 12 events with real or imaginary friends”

If you can't be arsed training your athletes you can plunge straight into the events themselves and forget the management side. If you're a couch potato you can forget about exercising your fingers and just take the training and management route. But what makes the Olympics so special?

design blueprints for the sporting arenas. Commentary is also provided, so *S2000* certainly won't be lacking in the detail department.

We reckon it's refreshing to see a developer trying to add something extra to the tired formula used by so many track-and-field-type games, and not just relying on a licence to sell its product. Of course, we could be proved wrong, but we reckon *S2000* is going to be a barrel of laughs. Pass the steroids... **WZ**



Train your team wisely, or you'll end up totally hammered.



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PCZONE REVIEWS

Don't spend a single penny until you've checked out the **ZONE** reviews first – we'll tell you which games you've got to buy and which games to avoid

THE PC ZONE GAMES SYSTEM

This is the machine we use to review new titles on. Our reviewers also use older machines to get an impression of gaming in the 'real' world, but this is what we currently consider the best value-for-money set up. As games become more demanding, the specs will change to reflect that

At the heart of the machine is a 600MHz AMD Athlon processor. These babies are seriously scorching, optimised for 3D applications, so first-person shooters fly like you wouldn't believe. Faster Athlons are now available, but at the present prices, this is probably the best value for money. The system bus runs at a godlike speed, so the whole thing is like a supercar with no brake pedal.

Supporting the processor is a MaxiGamer Xentor 32 from Guillemot, purveyors of all things graphicy. Based on the TNT2 chipset, these RAM-packed beasts are designed to cope with the polygons, textures and special effects that those game developers insist on chucking at the screen. Guillemot has a new GeForce 256-based card in the offing, which we're hoping to upgrade to soon.

Pionex has supplied the cases and 128Mb of PC100 memory for the motherboard. For gaming, especially with RAM prices as they are at the time of writing, 128Mb is the optimum amount. The cases have room for expansion without taking up excessive space. Nifty floppy slot too...

Hard drive services are provided by the stunning 7,200rpm, 20Gb Maxtor DiamondMax Plus (from the 5120 family

of drives). It's large and fast with room for full installs and quick to load games when you want to play them.

Sound services are supplied by VideoLogic. The SonicVortex 2 card is a PCI device featuring Aureal A3D 2.0, ideal for gamers. The latest drivers are stunning, using the card's own chip to reduce the processing overhead on the CPU when calculating 3D audio. Aureal's API now handles not only sounds themselves, but also their reflections: as you approach a doorway, you can hear sounds from the room reflected into the corridor. Immersive stuff.

VideoLogic also supply speakers from the superb Sirocco range. We primarily use Crossfires for gaming – they may seem expensive, but you get twice the quality you pay for. Four satellite speakers and a humongous subwoofer give pinpoint accuracy for 3D audio and bass meaty enough for the rumbliest explosions. We also use other speakers from the range (the original Sirocco and new Sirocco Pro) for sound card testing.

Guillemot's DVD Theater setup provides not only the ability to load games quickly, but also to watch DVD movies (essential for reviewing games – not) with its bundled MPEG decoder card.

Peripherals are supplied by Microsoft, from USB mice (top-notch for first-person shooters) to the full force-feedback monty – joysticks and driving wheels – and the ubiquitous SideWinder gamepads.

Last, but not least, are headphones from Philips (when the others in the office are suffering from Sirocco overkill) and fabulous 17inch Brilliance monitors (107Bs). If you're used to cheap monitors typically bundled with new PCs, the crispness and stability of the image on these comes as quite a shock.

REVIEWS YOU CAN TRUST

We at **ZONE** pride ourselves on telling you exactly what we think. Our reviewers are the most experienced and talented in the business. They're all experts in their chosen genre, and won't pull any punches – if a game's not worth buying, we'll tell you why. But we don't leave it there. We want to know what you think of the games that come out, which is why we have our Feedback section on page 94. This is where you get the opportunity to put your point of view into **PC ZONE**.



CHECK THE SPECS!

The standard spec machine these days is a P233 with 32Mb of memory – but before a game you need to make sure it will work on your system. Because the tech specs on packaging can be a little optimistic, make sure you check out the We Say bit in our tech specs box. This is where we report on what we think the minimum tech specs should be. If a game runs like a tortoise on the machine listed by the publishers, we'll tell you. All the games reviewed are tested on the minimum-spec PC as quoted on the packaging.

WHERE TO CALL

Having trouble finding any of the games listed in the reviews section of the magazine? Here are the numbers you need to call

Acclaim 020 7344 5000 • Activision 01895 456700 • Anco 01322 292513 • Blue Byte (Germany) 49 0 208 450880 • Codemasters 01926 814132 • Cryo 01926 315552 • Eidos Interactive 020 8636 3000 • Electronic Arts 01932 450000 • Empire Interactive 020 8343 7337 • Europress 01625 855000 • Gremlin Interactive 0114 263 9900 • GT Interactive 020 8222 9700 • Hasbro Interactive 020 8569 1234 • Infogrames 0161 827 8000 • Interplay 020 7551 4222 • Microids (France) 00 33 146 01 54 01 • Microsoft 0345 002 000 • Mattel 01444 246333 • NovaLogic 020 7405 1777 • Rage Software 0151 237 2200 • Take 2 Interactive 01753 854 444 • THQ 01483 767656 • Ubi Soft 020 8944 9000 • Zblac 01626 332233

MEET THE TEAM

All **PC ZONE**'s reviewers are experts in their field. We like to give every game that comes in for review the best chance, which is why we give it to a fan of the genre.

What would you do to improve *Daiikatana*?



CHRIS ANDERSON
GENRE RPG, adventure, strategy
CURRENTLY PLAYING *EverQuest: Ruins of Kunark*

Take it back in a time machine three years, which is when it should have been released.



DAVE WOODS
GENRE FPS, RPG, arcade
CURRENTLY PLAYING *Quake III*

Fit it with a pair of incontinence pants and retire it to an old folk's home.



RICHIE SHOEMAKER
GENRE RTS, space combat
CURRENTLY PLAYING *Allegiance*

Improve it? It's beyond help.



MARK HILL
GENRE Adventure, RPG, turn-based
CURRENTLY PLAYING *Championship Manager 99/00*

Not release it. It was much better as a mythical non-existent game.

THE FUTURE IS BRIGHT

★ REVIEWS EDITOR Dave Woods



"It's been a pretty poor start to the new millennium. Good games have been particularly thin on the ground since Christmas and all the triple-A titles we've been waiting for, namely *Vampire*, *Deus Ex* and *Black & White* have done their

best to avoid public scrutiny.

But I reckon the drought is nearly over. For a start John Romero has finally decided that enough is enough and sent us a final, finished, review copy of his opus *Daikatana*. Was it worth the wait? You'll have to turn the page and find out for yourself. I stayed up all night for two weeks in order to give it the fairest and fullest trial possible.

And there are other choice cuts this month. Digital Anvil's space epic *StarLancer* is tackled by our very own spaced-out staff writer Martin Korda. Richie has spent the month online to bring you the most comprehensive review of *Allegiance* in the known universe, and Chris 'big boss man' Anderson finally got to sample the new RPG *Soulbringer*.

Add the sequel to Shiny's underated shooter, *MDK*, and the latest in EA's never-ending cash cow FIFA series and you've got yourself a pretty healthy spread of titles. And things are going to get much, much better.

Having just spent a week in sun-soaked LA at the massive games-fest E3 (it's a hard, hard life sometimes), I've seen the games you're going to be playing over the next couple of years. The future's bright and with any luck *Deus Ex*, or *Vampire*, or both will arrive in time for next month. Stranger things have happened. Namely *Daikatana*."

WHAT DO OUR SCORES MEAN?

90-100% Here at **ZONE** we score every game out of 100. If a game receives the impressive score of 90 or above, it is awarded the **PC ZONE 'Classic'** award. These games are original, innovative, compelling and are worth buying even if you're not really a fan of the genre.



80-89% Games that score 80-89 get the **PC ZONE 'Award For Excellence'**. These are excellent examples of their type of game and if you're a fan of the genre you should definitely consider buying the title.



70-79% Any games scoring between 70-79 have just missed an 'Award For Excellence', but don't ignore them. The score is well above average and that means you're getting a great title that's worth the investment if you're a fan of the genre.

50-69% Games that score in this region don't win any awards, but they're above average and well worth a look. If you're not a fan of the genre though, they will probably offer limited long-term appeal.

20-49% These games are below average and you should really only consider parting with your cash if you're a big fan of the series or genre, or you happen to see them at a reduced price.

0-19% Games that score less than 20 should be avoided. They offer little in the way of long-term appeal, can be frustrating and definitely aren't much fun. If a game is seriously bugged, then it will also fall into this category. You have been warned.



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62 DAIKATANA

The wait is over, now find out whether it's been worth it.

66 MDK2

The critically acclaimed action/platformer is back. With a dog.

68 SOULBRINGER

From the creator of *Realms of the Haunting* comes this impressive RPG.

71 DOGS OF WAR

Craig Charles provides comic relief in this canine RTS.

72 ALLEGIANCE

Online space combat sim from Microsoft.

75 EURO 2000

Is there any blood left in the license or has it already been squeezed dry? The latest FIFA lands on our desk.

76 LEMMINGS REVOLUTION

One of the most addictive games of all time gets the 3D treatment in this rotating sequel.

78 STARLANCER

High speed adrenaline pumping space combat action, from the developers of the *Wing Commander* series.

80 TACHYON: THE FRINGE

Be an intergalactic mercenary, in a new space combat sim from Novalogic.

80 SIMCITY WORLD EDITION

Build the city of your dreams or nightmares.

81 MARTIAN GOTHIC

Resident Evil style antics in this space/horror action/adventure.

81 TEST DRIVE VI

A sixth outing for this popular racing series.

81 NASCAR 2000

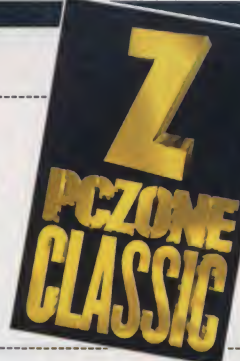
Go round in circles and get dizzy with EA's newest racer.

IT'S A TOUGH CALL...

Under the new **ZONE** scoring system, new games will have to be pretty spectacular to receive this award. They will have to take their genre to unprecedented new heights, and represent a major step forward for PC gaming. As you can see from the **PC ZONE** hall of fame on page 65, there are now very few titles that can

justifiably be described as **PC ZONE Classics**. This trend will continue across all genres. Generally speaking, all **ZONE Classics** are must-have titles (the benchmark title being the definitive game of the genre), but that does not mean you should discount games that score 80+ per cent. These games receive the **PC**

ZONE award for excellence and are essential buys if you are a fan of the genre the game fits into. Classics, on the other hand, are games we think will appeal to everyone and will bring new fans to that particular genre. There will not be many of them. When we say a game is a Classic, we mean it!



MARTIN KORDA

GENRE Strategy, space combat
CURRENTLY PLAYING *StarLancer*

I wouldn't change anything. If I did, I'd have nothing left to laugh at.



PAUL MALLINSON

GENRE Action, RPG, turn-based
CURRENTLY PLAYING *Vampire* beta version, *Soldier Of Fortune*

Install *Half-Life* over the top of it.



CHARLIE BROOKER

GENRE FPS, action/adventure
CURRENTLY PLAYING *Soldier Of Fortune*

I'd make it out of meat, fry it, then stick a bit of it in a bush.



ALISON BAKER

GENRE Strategy
CURRENTLY PLAYING *SimCity 3000: World Edition*

I'd genetically mutate it.



JAMES LYON

GENRE Action/adventure
CURRENTLY PLAYING *MDK 2*

I wouldn't change it. I'd use the CD to reflect the sun into Romero's eyes.



STEVE HILL

GENRE Football, racing
CURRENTLY PLAYING *Championship Manager 99/00*

I'd turn it into a football management game.

DAIKATANA

★ £34.99 • Eidos Interactive • Out now

What's the difference between *Daikatana* and the European Championships? Dave Woods has been waiting almost four years for both, but only one was worth the wait

Oh dear. Oh dear, oh dear, oh dear. Not the words that John Romero would want to see adorning the start of the first review of the full version of *Daikatana*, but they're the only words that are apt. *Daikatana* was going to change the world. It was going to be the best first-person shooter ever. John Romero, of *Doom* and *Quake*, was behind it. Then came the slippage. And more slippage, until the word *Daikatana* became a running joke. Now it's finished, and unfortunately it isn't going to set the world alight. At all.

You can see what Romero was trying to do – create an epic. So instead of concentrating on one game and making it the best in the genre, Romero has tried to create four different games in one with the end result that none are up to scratch. *Daikatana* is spread across four different episodes, or ages, and each one has radically different architecture, level design and feel. The weapons are completely different between ages, as are your enemies and goals. Starting off in futuristic Japan, the game spans ancient Greece, Norway in the Dark Ages,

and San Francisco future-style for the climax.

FUNDAMENTAL FLAWS

Funnily enough (or not if you've actually paid money for the game), the first episode is the worst. Rather than pitching headfirst into a slam-bang battle, you find yourself negotiating horrible linear levels packed with small metallic frogs, annoying dragonflies and motorised crocodiles. We kid you not. It gets better, marginally, and some of the open levels later on, particularly in Ancient Greece, are almost worth battling through to, despite the fact that they still feel sub-*Tomb Raider*. But not quite. The game features too many design faults, which is ironic considering Romero's reputation is based on the fact that he is the

daddy of game design. All we can say is *Daikatana* must be his illegitimate child.

Take the presentation. The *Quake II* engine was good in its time, but its time was 1997/8 and it hasn't really got a place in the 21st century. It's been enhanced, but *Sin* was enhanced *Quake II* and it looks no better. Textures, for the most part, are dull and landscapes angled and very repetitive. There are also inherent problems such as not being able to fire through wide grills (the game engine reads them as solid blocks). Then there's the sound, which is dreadful. Effects range from clanging (when you hit most enemies) to annoying Americanisms and ridiculous taunts. Atmospheric music? What's that then?

You get all this in the first five minutes, which is about the time it takes for you to realise that the AI is on par with the original *Doom* and *Quake*. Everything works on

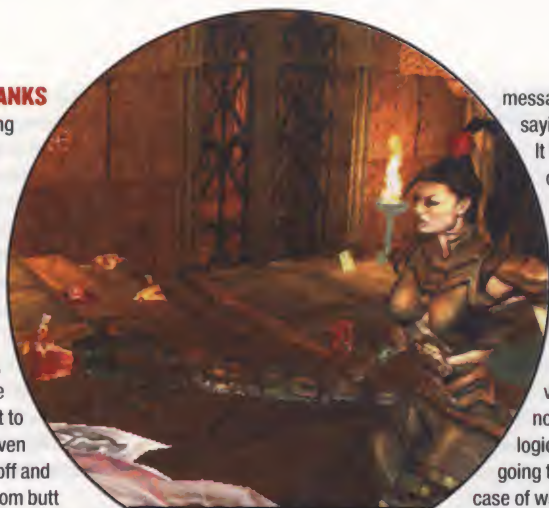
“Romero's reputation is based on the fact that he is the daddy of game design. *Daikatana* must be his illegitimate child”

two simple triggers. If you damage something it charges at you until you kill it. If you move into the line of sight of anything then it charges at you until you kill it.



TWO SHORT PLANKS

You can do anything else you want and the guards and monsters in *Daikatana* will ignore you completely. You can spray weapons around an enclosed room, kill people who are standing right next to their mates, and even take your clothes off and dance around a room butt naked without causing the slightest bit of concern. It's as if *Half-Life* never existed. If you've played *Doom* or *Quake* then you'll know what this means. To progress, all you have to do is startle something, back-off and shoot until dead. Repeat ad infinitum, or until ennui sets in. And the similarities to *Doom* don't stop there. Do you remember the 'funny' messages that it used to spit out if you dared to quit the game? Well, they're back, and even 'funnier' than ever: "If you leave now I'll start working on summoning a Shoggoth to come and tear you apart while you sleep. Is that OK?" And, of course, if you want to quit the game then you've got to click on yes. Hilarious, John, really hilarious.



One of your deranged sidekicks with the poison staff. Run for your life.

Next come the puzzles. And we're using that word in the loosest possible sense here. Press a button and a cut-scene appears showing you the door you've just opened. Sometimes, wait for it, the doors are actually on timed release, so that you've got to press the button and then race back along the corridor before the door closes. If you don't make it you have to go all the way back, press the button again and figure out where you went wrong. Now where did they get that brilliant idea from? Others are even more cunning. There's seemingly a dead-end ahead and two buttons in front of you. You press one and a

message is displayed saying 'One More To Go'. It took us ages to work out the rest.

To be fair, some of the later levels pose more serious problems, but only in terms of navigating your way back and forward through various 'hubs'. There's nothing particularly logical and nothing that's going to stump you, it's just a case of wasting time running around until you hit the right path, or the right button.

NO SAVING GRACE

There are other serious flaws in the game as well. Like the fact that you can't save the game without a save gem. We've got nothing against the concept of using limited saves, like in *Soldier Of Fortune*, where you start off with three saves on each level and choose when you want to use them. It makes the game more challenging and it stops you stop-starting the game every time you go round a corner.

But in *Daikatana* you actually have to find a save gem in order to save your game. In a game like this, where instant death can be waiting round any corner, it's

HISTORY REPEATED

We reckon it's time that Romero went back to a school for a spot of history, *ZONE*-style.

EARLY 1997

Ion Storm is set up. *Daikatana* is slated for a late 1997 release, which seemed fairly plausible at the time. After all, Romero didn't have to create a brand new 3D engine from scratch, and with a design brief that spanned *Wolfenstein 3D*, *Doom*, *Doom 2* and *Quake*, the game would surely kick, erm, ass.



MAY 1998

Unreal is released. Not the greatest game in the world, but the graphics engine is sublime and still probably one of the best looking in the known universe.



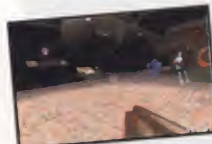
LATE 1998

Sin and *Half-Life* are released. *Sin* is bugged to buggery, but still a great game. *Half-Life* needs no introduction. It's still the best single-player game out there, and, along with *Opposing Force*, makes *Daikatana* look rubbish.



LATE 1999

Quake III Arena and *Unreal Tournament* are released. Best multiplayer games to date and in *Quake III*, the best 3D engine. Both make multiplayer *Daikatana* – of which



there is still no sign – look rubbish.

MARCH 2000

Prima's official *Daikatana Strategy Guide* lands on our desk. But still no sign of the game.



APRIL 21 2000

Two and a half years after the scheduled release, a review copy of *Daikatana* finally lands on our desk. It's pretty rubbish.



MAY 19 2000

Daikatana finally goes on sale across the world. Three people buy it and immediately demand a refund.

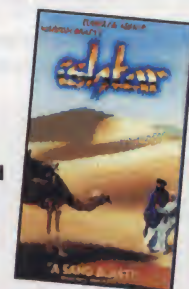


DON'T BELIEVE THE HYPE...

Big talk, even bigger budgets and all box-office flops. If *Daikatana* was a film it would be in good company

ISHTAR

Worth renting from your local video shop because it's one of the worst and most expensive films ever made. At least Ed Wood films had a certain clunky charm. This had Dustin Hoffman looking suitably embarrassed.

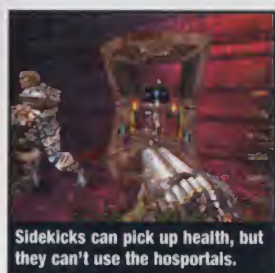


WATERWORLD

Kevin Costner in a film that leaked more water than it had huge futuristic sets. It nearly finished his career, but somehow he survived. Shame. Not quite in *Ishtar*'s league though because it's got Dennis Hopper in it and he's fantastic.



The mighty sword of *Daikatana*. Use it and you'll be dead in seconds.



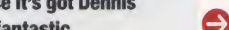
Sidekicks can pick up health, but they can't use the hospitals.



Watch out for the greenfly.



You need to use your sidekicks to complete some of the puzzles.





MULTIPLAYER DAIKATANA

Better than the single-player. But still not up to much

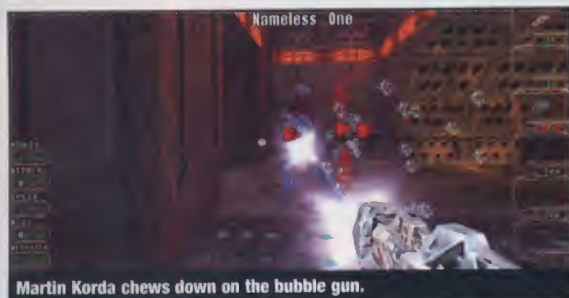
Daikatana was designed as a single-player game. Only trouble is the single-player game isn't much cop, which leaves this. The plus side? The *Quake II* engine has done the rounds on the Internet and, if you're using a phone line, then you're going to be guaranteed a decent frame rate – if you can find anyone playing it that is.

In its favour, some of the weapons work really well, including the Novabeam and the Ripgun. But just to counteract this you've also got the C4 Vizatargo, which has been designed with campers, like Martin Korda, in mind. It's a proximity explosive that you can scatter around with gay abandon, waiting for someone to trip their way through your makeshift minefield. Rubbish.

And the rest is pretty much as you'd expect. Deathmatch and CTF (with security cameras, which is pretty cool) rule the roost and there are no bots, so you'd better make sure you've got a load of mates ready. It's not bad, but it's nothing new and not worth spending money on.



It's deathmatch, but not as we know it after playing *Quake III*.



Martin Korda chews down on the bubble gun.

WHAT'S THE STORY THEN?

Is *Daikatana* an RPG?

Not at all, but it does provide you with a simple levelling-up system. When you reach certain points in the game you're deemed to have enough experience points to increase the powers of your character. You can choose to allocate points to increase speed, rate of attack, power and jumping. You can also find power-ups that take one of these characteristics up to its maximum for a limited amount of time. It's one of the more interesting points of the game, but it doesn't really make that much of a difference in reality.

Pick a power-up and watch your stats soar.

IN PERSPECTIVE

If you like shooters then you're spoiled for choice. Want multiplayer deathmatch? *Quake III* and *Unreal Tournament* are still slugging it out. We like both of them. Single-player? It's still *Half-Life* and *Opposing Force*, and there's nothing *Daikatana* can do about it. If you want a no-brainer then *Sin*, at £9.99, is still probably a better buy than Romero's opus, and if you must have a fantasy setting then *Heretic II* is excellent.

Quake III

Unreal Tournament

Half-Life

Opposing Force

Sin

Heretic II

Daikatana

madness and it means that you end up playing the same part over and over again until you work out exactly how to get through without being slaughtered. Boring? Oh yes. Irritating? Chinese water torture is an easy option compared.

The ridiculous thing is that the game's been designed so each level is split into several smaller parts, and there's a split load for each one à la *Half-Life*. Every time you go through one of these points your game is saved anyway. So, if you know you've just got through a hard bit of the game and you're low on health you can retrace your route and save your game that way whenever you want. It just wastes more time.

To pull a veil over this hideous design fault, Romero seems to have scattered these valuable gems around at random. There's a distinct lack of them in the first episode and then absolutely loads around later on. To make matters worse he's even hidden some of them in 'secret places', so you can see them but you can't actually get to them without running around the corridors and brushing your body against cracks in the wall.

WITH FRIENDS LIKE THESE...

There's worse still to come. Because one of the big new features in *Daikatana* is the introduction of the sidekicks. NPCs that you can bark orders at, and who fight on your behalf and cover your back. Only trouble is, *Half-Life* and *Kingpin* have been

there and done this. And we already know, having played these games to death, that the concept isn't actually that brilliant in execution unless you take the minimalist *Half-Life* route. *Daikatana*, despite the extra year(s) that it's had, hasn't improved the situation.

In fact, you'll be glad to hear that it has made it worse because when one of your sidekicks dies in this game, your game is over.

Add to this the lack of save games, the fact that you've got no

“Romero has certainly expended a lot of imagination in coming up with some of the more bizarre creations”

direct control, bar a few orders – and they often ignore these orders anyway – and that their AI is on the bad side of crap and you've got some serious problems.

Friendly fire has been left on and your sidekicks often get overcome with suicidal tendencies and stray into the path



Well, then--looks like we're going after the sword after all. Long as I get my cut, of course . . .

Find the sword and save the world. If you can be arsed.



The bloody annoying dragonfly things from episode one.



Take me to your leader. I want to tell him what I think of his game.

of your bullets. Also, if they get hold of any serious area-damage weapons then you'd better head for the hills because they don't care whether they take you out or a couple of motorised frogs.

But, just to show that we're not kicking the game unnecessarily, the sidekicks don't do everything wrong. They can negotiate paths and they don't get squashed by lifts like they did in *Kingpin* (although they do have a problem getting through doors or leaving levels on occasions).

UNBALANCED

Which brings us to the final ingredient in any shooter – the weapons. And Romero's certainly used a lot of imagination in coming up with some of the more bizarre creations, you can also look forward to a different arsenal in each episode. Just don't expect them to be balanced. So many of the levels are made out of twisted, claustrophobic corridors, that it makes it impossible to use any of the more powerful area-damage weapons like the Shockwave or the Sunflare. Use them and you or your sidekicks will invariably perish as well.

The weapons that get you through the levels are the ones you can use to retreat and fire at the same time, like the Ion Blaster

(the first weapon you find) and the Discus. It might be boring, but it's the one sure-fire way to get yourself through the game. Some of the other weapons are just plain stupid, like the Hades Hammer. Apparently, this is the only weapon that you can use to defeat the giant statues, but we didn't have any problems at all dispatching them with our trusty discs.

OK, there are a lot of weapons, and they're pretty varied, but there's no point having the number if the quality and balance is all wrong. This applies equally to single-player and multiplayer Daikatana. There's nothing like *Quake*'s Railgun, or *UT*'s Sniper Rifle, and there's no alternative fire mode to play around with.

If it all sounds a bit negative, then that's the way it is. We're not kicking *Daikatana* because it's an easy target. We were actually looking forward to playing it and proving people wrong by giving it a decent score. But it wasn't to be. We've given it a fair go and the game just doesn't cut it. In our opinion it's no better than *Quake* or *Sin* and it's streets and streets behind *Half-Life*, or even *Soldier Of Fortune*.

If it had been released on time then it would have gone down pretty well. As it is, we're

sure that Eidos and John Romero will be pleased to see the back of it. Our advice? Keep your money in your pocket and wait for the first single-player games based on the new generation of 3D engines. Wait for *Voyager: Elite Force* and the like. If you've got nothing to play in the meantime then you can always download a good mod for *Half-Life* from the Internet. Just don't buy this. Unless, of course, you want a distinctly average, old-fashioned, no-brainer shooter. [E]

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P233
Memory 32Mb RAM **ALSO REQUIRES**
4Mb OpenGL compliant card **WE SAY**
Whatever you use to run *Half-Life* will be fine. P300, 64Mb RAM and a decent 3D card basically

PCZ VERDICT

- UPPERS Four different ages • Game improves as you play through
- DOWNERS Poor level design • Terrible AI • Save gems • Feels like a two year old game

53 It really wasn't worth the wait

SECOND OPINION

In the interests of all things fair and balanced we asked some other **ZONE** reviewers for their thoughts



CHRIS ANDERSON

This is a game I had high hopes for despite the comedy surrounding its lengthy development process. Unfortunately, not only does it fall short of my expectations for such a big title, it's the worst example of its genre I have seen for some time. The save gems idea is baffling, the AI suspect, and the less said about the level design the better. Having said all that I am confident that Ion Storm will come bouncing right back with *Deus Ex*, which we predict will be one of the biggest games this year.



RICHIE SHOEMAKER

Even if *Daikatana* had been released a year ago it wouldn't have stood up to the games of the time. Next to *Half-Life* it's not even fit to lick ass, let alone kick it. The 'cool' sidekicks are crap, the level design uninspired and the sounds emanating from Dave's PC as he played through the entire game reminded me of *Sin*, a game that, even though I dislike, I'd much rather play. John Romero can certainly talk a good game but he's yet to make one. I wouldn't even brag a copy, let alone buy it.



MARK HILL

This was a legendary game way before its release, and the fact that it's not very good won't change that. It will be remembered as the *Heaven's Gate* and *Waterworld* of computer games. The big question is: where does Romero go from here? After such a spectacular failure (there's no way the sales will come close to covering the costs) his reputation is going to take a major tumble. It will be interesting to see whether he can reinvent himself after spending all this time with antiquated technology. In the meantime, the only reason to own a copy of *Daikatana* is to hold a piece of history in your hands, but you certainly won't want to play with it.



MARTIN KORDA

There's nothing worse than an anti-climax, and *Daikatana* is just that. Like most people I've been following its never-ending development with some amusement, but also a hint of hope. After playing the game for a few hours, that hope was replaced with horror. The graphics are ancient and jerky and the AI at times makes old Spectrum games look cutting edge. I can see what Romero has tried to do, and all credit to him for trying to bring in NPCs and RPG elements into an FPS. However, his self-professed dream has turned out to be somewhat of a nightmare. As much as we all wanted to like it, there simply wasn't enough to like. Dave 'Easily Confused By Illogical Movements' Woods has got his review spot on, but I'm surprised he didn't like the game more, considering all of the enemies move and attack in straight lines. Oh well...



One of the most impressive features: the fish.



His bark is worse than his bite.

Is it a shooter? Is it a platformer? No, it's *Daikatana*.

Do you know where I can hire a moped?



Geez, it's all go in here.



Disarm the bomb by following the wires to their respective buttons. Almost good.



Kill people and check they've combed their hair at the same time.



Hawkins puts a bit of Leonard Cohen on.

MDK 2

★ £29.99 • Interplay • Out now

Two men and their dog went to mow down some aliens. Live at the event: James Lyon

Everybody remembers the original *MDK*—although not many people actually went out and bought it—as being a somewhat strange but entertaining shoot 'em up/platformer. The sequel is even stranger, as a quick glance at the three main characters will show.

MAX

He's a six-limbed cigar-smoking robot dog whose levels focus chiefly on all-out blasting. Because of his multiple appendages, Max can use up to four different guns at once, with the developers being kind enough to leave enough ammunition around to ensure you're always well stocked. Unfortunately, the technique of selecting your weapons using more than one key is tricky, and doing so in a firefight can mean the distinct possibility of getting hit as you struggle to find the right one. It would have been far easier to assign each weapon slot to one of the function keys.

Max is a competent character at best. His levels may be simple, but they're fun and certainly more enjoyable than this next guy.

DOCTOR FLUKE HAWKINS

On the surface, the Doctor's missions sound quite interesting. Because of his comparable weakness to the others, you're

supposed to rely on your logic and skill to defeat your foes. In fact, the first of these levels starts off well, with you having to construct a leaf-blower to push your enemies towards the clutches of a giant man-eating plant. But this seems to be the only clever example as his tasks mostly devolve into platform jumping and shooting. But that still leaves you with his interface and control system, which are two of the most dislikeable things in the whole game. The platform sections are similarly annoying. It's difficult to judge jumps correctly and the controls just don't feel good enough to perform such actions anyway. Indeed, Doctor Hawkins is an all-round disappointment and the worst of the characters by a long shot.

KURT

Kurt's own specific blend of firepower and platforming exudes a certain something that the rest lack. Praise must go, in this respect, to the ribbon chute—a device that allows you to float gently to the ground—which seems to make all the difference to proceedings. While Max's jetpack and Hawk's jumping cause frustration, unravelling this seems to give Kurt the edge in the control stakes.

And let's not forget the sniper scope. There has been an abundance of sniping since the

IN PERSPECTIVE

Evolva may be sterile in comparison, but it does bear many similarities. The original *MDK* is slightly better for having Kurt all the way through, and then there is *POP3D*, which is still crap.

Evolva

MDK

MDK2

Prince Of Persia 3D

original first appeared on the scene, but *MDK 2* still conveys a sense of impressiveness as you zoom onto your target. All of Kurt's levels involve the use of the sniper scope in some capacity, whether it's to operate inaccessible switches or shoot distant enemies, and it gives a level of satisfaction that proves exactly why sniping has become so popular in recent games.

Kurt's definitely the best character in terms of both play and design. He's not bogged down by a tricky interface or controls and, how shall I say it, feels just right. It's just a shame they didn't decide to base the whole sequel around him.

HOLD ON TO YOUR SIDES

Right, that's the characters out of the way. I think we've got time to briefly check out the hilarious plot: you have to save the Earth from the evil minions of a giant

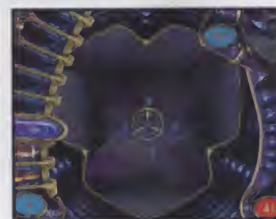
★ WALKTHROUGH

MDK 2

Reaching the end of a level provides you with the chance to kill the controller—let's face it, it's more than he deserves for trying to hurt you. If only you knew how. You do now...



It's an end of level boss and a big one at that. It could be tricky trying to figure out how to kill him, but it's easy when you know how, naturally.



See? There's nothing to it. Turn on your sniping mode, aim at those balls in the centre of the device, and shoot them off, avoiding laser fire in the process.



"Don't turn your back on me. I didn't know she was your sister."

The Atomic Toaster. Funny idea. Crap weapon.

purple alien aide, Shwang Shwing (ha ha), by flying to the planet Swizzle Firma (ha ha) in your spaceship, the Jim Dandy (ha ha). Never let it be said that *MDK 2* is filled to the brim with humour. Yes, never.

And the rest? Well, *MDK 2* is certainly a good-looking game but isn't everything nowadays? What does look impressive are the spacious rooms and chambers that engulf the players. What struck me most was the alien cityscape witnessed in a later level, with its vehicles zooming overhead and underneath as you

case of simply shooting at them until they keel over (at least, not at first), but rather to accomplish certain tasks such as shooting certain switches to gain the upper hand. These encounters prove to be the most fun, although, like the normal enemies, beating them is bit too easy after you've learnt their simple patterns.

THE BAD TOUCH

As for what's left, it all boils down to a series of what can only be called touches that tie the game together. Like its predecessor, the fact that you're not always going

skill. Worse, they're incredibly short and don't add anything, so what's the point?

Likewise, at one point you get to take control of a fish (called Chuckleberry Finn, those crazy guys), which could be OK, until you realise that you're stuck in a basic maze with yet more bad controls and unavoidable death. I mean, it may be entertaining to put a hat on a dead dog, but if you start dressing it in a suit and taking it out to dinner it begins to lose something. Especially if it buys the most expensive thing on the menu and spills wine all over the table. From afar *MDK 2*'s variety looks promising, but when you get up close and actually play it, you see it's not as good as it could have been.

It's not all doom and gloom, though, there's still a lot to like if you're prepared to play it – once again I'll mention how good Kurt's levels are. And Max does come a close second. You could try to ignore the Doctor, but why would you want to play a game that's only two-thirds good? **[C]**

“Like its predecessor, the fact that you're not always going around mindlessly blasting is a large point in its favour”

run along walkways suspended above a fog-bound city. Naturally, it meant a slower frame-rate, but it shows off the engine a treat.

Enemies are, for the most part, satisfactory. Auto-aiming makes killing them a little too easy and though most are quite similar, they never prove unfair. Or that much of a challenge, come to think of it. No, it's the end of level bosses that provide the best thrill. Most of the time it's not just a

around mindlessly blasting is a large point in its favour. Even though there are plenty of ideas, as often happens, it seems to be a case of the developers pulling any 'wacky' idea out of the barrel without checking if it would actually be any good. For instance, the sub-games that start some of the levels and involve you trying to avoid oncoming objects. These are no fun at all and the controls make it more a matter of luck than

END



3 A few of those later and you've finally revealed the controller. Now it's time to teach him a lesson. A few shots to the head is more than he deserves.



4 But that's still not enough. It's time to get up close and finish him off. Kill him! Kill them all! Or just delete the game. That'll get rid of them!



PCZ VERDICT

UPPERS Kurt's level • Sniper scope

• Plenty of variety.

DOWNERS Doctor Hawkins' levels •

Not that funny • Difficult interface and controls • Too short

70 A diverse and clever game that could have been much better

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor

P200 Memory 16Mb RAM

ALSO REQUIRES 4Mb 3D Card

WE SAY PII 400, 64Mb RAM, 8Mb 3D Card



the character screen. Note the journal on the right, important quests lie therein.



Visit inns for important info and lots of useless stuff too.



Madrigal, your starting point for the game.



Soulbringer has one of the best spell systems we've seen.



Talk to men in strange hoods, should you feel so inclined.

SOULBRINGER

★ £39.99 • Infogrames • Out now

We are not shallow. We don't care about graphics, gameplay is king. Chris Anderson tries to convince himself

If you look at something hard enough and for long enough, you will eventually begin to see that which is not there."

This is the mantra I have been repeating in my head for the last few days. I looked at *Soulbringer* for the first time and thought: "No, it can not possibly be meant to look like that".

We were not expecting pixelated backgrounds and building interiors from a game that took four years to complete. Never ones to write a game off without giving it a fair chance, we tried multiple hardware configurations to coax *Soulbringer* into providing decent 3D graphics

support. Voodoo 2 and 3, TNT2, Matrox G400, GeForce Pro, all the latest and greatest 3D cards of our time were brought in en masse in an attempt to run *Soulbringer* in the way it was intended. Oh how we laughed when we realised we *were* seeing the game the way it was intended. Don't get me wrong, it doesn't look *awful*, but you will definitely be taken aback when you load it up for the first time. It looks like something that should have come out two years ago except it's 3D, which is presumably the reason for the lack of visual splendour.

Infogrames says the game "could be described as pixelated,

but could also be described as crisp or high-definition". Hmm, fair enough but it still looks pixelated from where we're sitting. Of course, graphics aren't everything, but we have come to expect a certain visual standard from new titles. *Soulbringer* does not live up to this standard, and graphics snobs will doubtless turn their noses up at it for this reason alone. Unfortunately, the problems are not purely aesthetic...

YE OLDE INTERFACE

Soulbringer's control interface and the word 'intuitive' are destined never to meet. A roving camera that sometimes has a mind of its own, and a clumsy mouse control system for moving your character around and interacting with objects contrive to make simple

tasks, such as picking things that you find in barrels and boxes up, a chore. Your character ambles along slowly to the designated point before performing the most convoluted 'item pick-up' ritual I have ever seen in a virtual reality video game. Worse still, the main character suffers from delayed reaction syndrome. Point the mouse where you want him to go,

I had a difference of opinion with an end-of-level zombie priest and found myself reloading several times, because the main character seemed to disagree with my opinion that he should get out of the way when heavy duty spells were being thrown at him. It was at this point that the suspicion the game had

"Simple tasks such as picking stuff up is a chore. Worse still, the main character suffers from delayed reaction syndrome"

click away and watch him stand there thinking about it before he carries out your commands. This is irritating to start with, and plain old annoying at later stages when you come up against end of chapter 'bosses'.

been rush-finished crept into the equation. Things such as donning armour that appears in your inventory but not on your character when you return to the game world suggests a lack of attention



Equip yourself here, although your armour won't appear on your character in-game which, let's face it, is crap.



Rudimentary visuals mask a game of some depth.



Someone's losing a lot of health here, hope it's not me.

IN PERSPECTIVE

Soulbringer is perhaps the most traditional RPG of this bunch, and plays pretty much how you would expect it to. *Nox* is a straightforward arcade spellfest, and *Planescape: Torment* is the best true RPG money can buy. *Ascension* is the best looking game here, but it has the most linear gameplay. If you could marry *Ascension*'s looks with *Planescape: Torment*'s gameplay you would have the best game in the world. But you can't, obviously.

Planescape: Torment

Soulbringer

Nox

Ultima Ascension

to detail. This in turn suggests that, after four years, the development team had simply had enough of the whole thing and pushed it out the door.

Somewhat surprisingly, however, despite the dodgy graphics and interface niggles, *Soulbringer* is worthy of your attention. This is why...

BRAVE NEW WORLD

After a very shaky start, which basically involves completing simplistic quests and trailing back and forth from dungeons to town to stock up on mana potions and food, *Soulbringer* suddenly springs to life right in front of you. A very neat teleport system that allows you to travel to key places in the game using a central hub, called a Hex, makes *Soulbringer* a much more enticing prospect than it appeared to be at first. The main Hex is your HQ where you have people consigned to you to teach about magic and build you better armour without all the pointless traipsing about that marred the earlier stages of the game. Suddenly your spells get better – there are a lot of them – and you are no longer confined to the town of Madrigal (expect to spend at least a day exploring this town and its surrounding areas before the game opens up to you properly). The quests improve and become more varied, and suddenly you are playing an RPG with depth, instead of a mundane goblin-hunt. In short, it suddenly 'gets good'.

Whether you will bother playing it this far to find that out

is another thing altogether. If the visuals and interface don't put you off, the repetitive slog to level 7 may well do the job. The only advice I can give you is to stick with it. This is no role-playing classic; it doesn't have the depth or storytelling prowess of *Planescape: Torment* or the atmosphere of *System Shock 2*. But it's a good example of a well-rounded RPG, set in an interesting gameworld with a great spell system and a reasonable arsenal of old world weaponry. **PCZ**

PCZ VERDICT

- UPPERS Huge game • Great spells • User friendly world design
- DOWNERS Poor presentation • Awful camera angles • Awkward interface

68 Imaginative and engrossing, if you persevere with it

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P233
Memory 32Mb RAM **WE SAY** That's fine if you're running in software

THE GAME THAT TIME FORGOT

Soulbringer, in all fairness, should have appeared about two years ago to have any real chance of making a big impression on the RPG community. Pixelated, poorly defined graphics and a complete lack of a multiplayer facility are not the hallmarks of a game that is going to take us by storm in the year 2000. You have to wonder what they've been doing for four years to come up with something like this when games such as *Everquest* were sporting beautiful 3D RPG worlds more than a year ago. *Ultima Ascension* also made a successful transition to lush 3D worlds recently, putting *Soulbringer* to shame visually, although, it's worth pointing out that *Ascension* is a bit pappas far as gameplay's concerned. It's just as well for *Soulbringer* that it has the gameplay to make up for its poor presentation, but it kind of hammers the point home that graphics are as important as gameplay these days, since we now expect all our games to look fantastic with the aid of the many impressive 3D cards currently on the scene. A missed opportunity then, and more is the pity.

Soulbringer's 'functional' graphics won't win any awards.



CARMAGEDDON

TDR 2000

Coming to a
Pavement
Near You.



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SCI

DOGS OF WAR

★ £34.99 • Take 2 Interactive • Out now

The game formerly known as *Warmonkeys* reviewed by the man still known as **Richie Shoemaker**

Much like the recent *Force Commander* and the soon to be released *Ground Control*, *Dogs Of War* is a 3D real-timer, which, unlike *Tiberian Sun* and *Age Of Empires*, doesn't require you to build bases or hoard units and allows you only to take into battle the units you'll need – no harvesting required. Sometimes you'll be able to 'buy' a few extras, sometimes not. The point is, if you can't complete your objective with the units under your command, you shouldn't be in control of a mouse.

Leaving aside the storyline for a moment (because it's rubbish) *Dogs Of War* professes to be a little different to your average strategy game. Apart from the switch of focus to more action-oriented play, there are a number of other chapters in the real-time strategy developers' rulebook

“In *Dogs Of War* you're allowed to see the entire map from the off, with enemy units appearing only when seen”

that have been ripped out and replaced, and not all of them make for interesting reading.

Traditionally, in real-time strategy games, units can only see about 3ft in front of them, beyond which great balls of cotton wool are put in place to obscure the unexplored terrain. In *Dogs Of War* you're allowed to see the entire map from the off, with enemy units appearing only when seen. Consequently, line of sight plays a large part in the game, with planes and helicopters able to act as spotters for artillery units.

Unfortunately, while the line of sight model works, in that being on higher ground affords you some protection, it's difficult to judge sometimes if you are on higher ground –

It would help the score if in direct control you could trust the actions of the units around you, but after watching tanks trying to drive through walls rather than around them, I have to say that it was only by avoiding the third-person mode altogether that I managed to get any enjoyment from the game, which is a shame

especially when you use the third-person view. Wassat? Third-person view? Yes, *Dogs Of War* allows you to command every unit in the game directly, moreover it allows you to command and control the other units at the same time, much like *BattleZone II*. Unfortunately, it never works as well or looks as good, thanks in the most part to the unwieldy control interface and the unresponsiveness of the units.

Moving the map with either the mouse or the keyboard you find that unless you have the view set at the right angle, suitably far out enough to fit the bulk of your units on screen, the camera juts across the landscape, which isn't so bad until you play across the most variable terrain. Without being drawn into specifics, because the controls are tailored to suit both the strategy and the action side of the game, it tends to feel over-complicated.



It sure beats watching *Robot Wars*.

IN PERSPECTIVE

Many parallels can be drawn between *Force Commander* and *Dogs Of War*, but where both feature a poor interface and scrappy linear gameplay, at least *Force Commander* has a decent story and features better units. Both games however, are inferior to the recent *Earth 2150*, which if you're into sci-fi RTS, we recommend you go for first.

Force Commander

Dogs Of War

BattleZone II

Earth 2150

because next to *BattleZone II* *Dogs Of War* is a much more strategic game.

PAWS FOR THOUGHT

While the missions themselves are varied and often frenetic, with some truly spectacular battles played out for your visual entertainment, *Dogs Of War* is encumbered with a rather poor interface. Once mastered and on level terms with the computer, things pick up, but it's the actual process of getting used to it that will turn most people off.

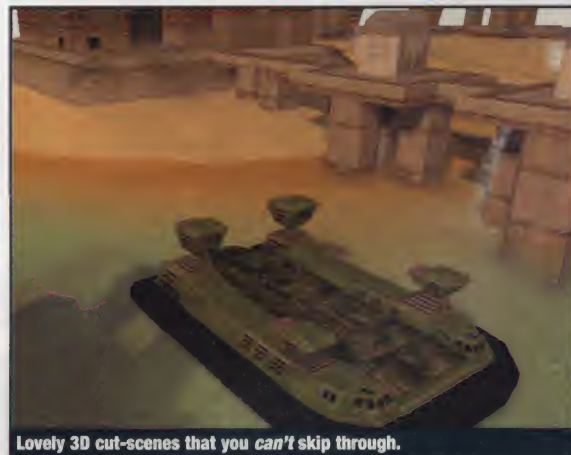
Heavily scripted AI lends itself to more surprises than puzzle-based tactical play, which means for the most part each mission sits well with the unfolding story. However, because the missions range from difficult to almost impossible, after attempting to complete a mission for the umpteenth time there are no surprises left. It wouldn't be so bad if there was some sort of 'skirmish' mode, whereby you could set up a game against the PC outside of the linear campaign game, just to brush up on your skills, but there isn't. What there is though, is one of the most irritating and unfunny tutorial



Let's try that again.



Now, if you could only tell which units were which.



Lovely 3D cut-scenes that you can't skip through.

sequences ever, starring the ubiquitous Craig Charles. Across the whole game, in fact, *Dogs Of War* tries to make up in laughs what it lacks in gameplay, but even Alan Partridge wouldn't be able to save this one.

In its favour *Dogs Of War* is different and it does try, but just like those Innovations catalogues that come with your Sunday paper, *Dogs Of War* is

filled with things you don't really need. It may look nice, but as with most things, first impressions don't really count for much. **PCZ**

PCZ VERDICT

- UPPERS Blend of real-time strategy and third-person action • Looks nice
- No resource management
- DOWNERS Paw interface • AI dogged with problems • Difficult linear missions and no skirmish mode
- No resource management

47 More a dogs dinner than the dangly bits

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor PII 266
Memory 32Mb RAM **ALSO REQUIRES**
3D accelerator and 650Mb hard drive space **WE SAY** 64Mb RAM and a second-generation 3D card are a must



Scouts can drop probes which act as eyes for the commander.



You can board bombers or transfer to friendly sectors from each station.



Bases are built from hollowed out asteroids.



Here you can find out about all the ships you can fly and equip them with missiles and special equipment.

ALLEGIANCE

★ £34.99 (optional US\$10 per month for premium play, first month free) • Microsoft • Out now

In space no one can hear you scream.
Online, **Richie Shoemaker** is all ears

With their steep learning curves, constant updates and inherent costs, online games are

something you either embrace wholeheartedly or shy away from. There is no middle ground. Once an online game has got you, going back to a single-player game can be an empty and soulless experience – albeit usually a cheaper one.

There is another problem with online gaming, however. Choice. If you get your kicks dressing up in chain mail armour, you are well catered for. Similarly, if you take delight from shooting fellow humans in the face. If however, you prefer flying among the stars, firing lasers and forming squadrons, the range of online games catering directly for you are a little thin. Admittedly, you can fly online in *FreeSpace 2*, *StarLancer*, or *X-Wing Alliance*, but, aside from deathmatches or rudimentary co-operative play, there isn't all that much there. Or at least there wasn't until now.

To get some idea of what *Allegiance* is all about, imagine yourself playing *Homeworld* (PCZ #82, 85%), perhaps last year's most innovative 3D real-time strategy game. Now imagine yourself sitting in the commander's chair in the relative safety of your home station, heading a fleet of hundreds of ships each, manned by *real* people and Americans. I'll say that again, *real* people.

Against you is another commander, again with a similar fleet under his command and, as well as directing scouts, fighters, bombers and cruisers to destroy the enemy through dozens of sectors linked by wormholes, you both must seek out resources and spend them wisely to research new ships and weapons.

Playing as tactical commander or investor (he who controls the purse strings) is probably the hardest job in the games industry – save doing PR for *Daikatana* – and, as such, good commanders are a rare

PCZONE
AWARD FOR
EXCELLENCE

commodity. Learning the trade is a thankless task; make too many bad decisions and not only will you be inundated with abuse, you will run the risk of being booted out of office. Thankfully, being in charge is made easier with a simple interface that becomes second nature. The simple fact is though that, if your side loses, very rarely will your pilots take the blame. As with real life, the best way to the top is through the ranks.

IN AT THE DEEP END

Whether you join a game halfway through or right at the start, your first choice of ship is usually limited to either Scout or Fighter. However, if you are new to the game, the best way to get started is to join a bomber pilot and man one of the turrets, if only to get used to what all the cluttered icons and symbols mean. Once you've mastered them (which I've yet to accomplish after more than three months playing the game)

“Playing as tactical commander or investor is probably the hardest job in the games industry – save doing PR for *Daikatana*”

then it's onto the next big hurdle – the flight dynamics.

Flying in *Allegiance* takes some getting used to. Those who prefer the arcade style of *FreeSpace 2* will find themselves swerving off in all directions, countering thrust by stabbing the keyboard with clenched fists and four-letter abuse. However, once mastered, the control system affords more strategic dogfights than you at first realise. With two similarly skilled pilots side-thrusting to manoeuvre into a firing position, one-on-one scraps can be tense affairs.

The ships themselves, around 25 in total, each require different tactics. Scouts are the most

IN PERSPECTIVE

As an online space combat game that offers epic scale battles, *Allegiance* really has no equal. NovoLogic's *Tachyon* is close and also offers a decent single-player game, and it's certainly an easier game to get into, but it lacks the strategic depth and the sense of community of *Allegiance*. If you live online and fancy yourself as a hotshot space jockey, *Allegiance* is the game to go for.

Allegiance

Tachyon: The Fringe

StarLancer

FreeSpace 2

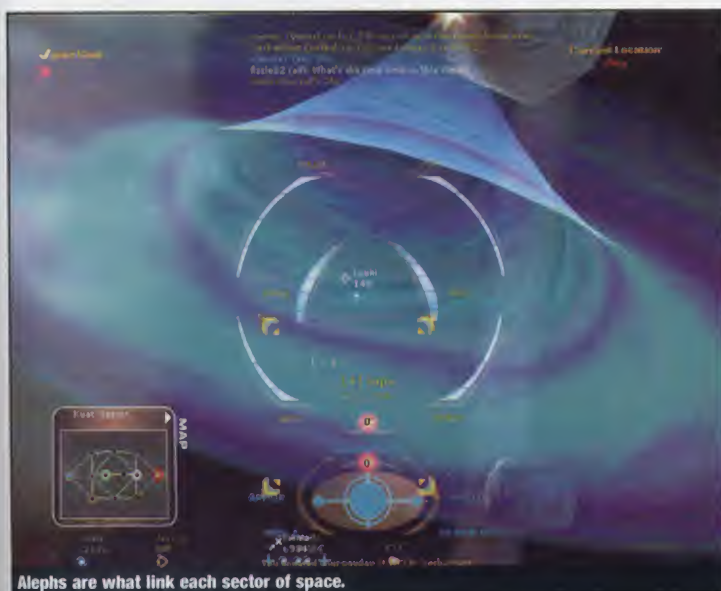
X-Wing Alliance

manoeuvrable, being able to thrust in all directions, while capital ship pilots are advised to stick to more direct routes, relying instead on the skills of their gunners to thwart fighter attacks. The point is, all the ships, no matter which of the three sides (four if you subscribe to the Allegiance Zone) you eventually align yourself with, all handle differently, and, even though the HUD is identical no matter what

you are flying, a quick tug on the joystick will soon tell you what ship you are in. As your team progresses, more ships become available, some at a huge cost in resources. Parallel to this, extra weapons, better shields and special equipment also come into play and if your superior, in his leather-bound command chair, is doing his job properly, your side will always stay ahead in the arms race. If the ships under him all follow orders, victory should be assured. Yeah, right.

TEAM FORTRESS

Online games are a bitch to review. They can be anything from terribly dull to incredibly



Allephs are what link each sector of space.



Death means a long journey home in an escape pod.

frantic. You could be playing against a bunch of selfish Yanks gunning for their own glory. Or you might find yourself playing with the nicest chaps in Christendom. Another factor is that, with some single-player games, what was a stinking pile of crap could be deodorised with the aid of a patch. And as the people who play them will know, online games are updated on almost a daily basis. Leave *Ultima Online* for a couple of months say, and you could be looking at the biggest download since Pamela Anderson's home-video was leaked on to the Internet.

Thankfully, *Allegiance* has already been through months of testing and your modem shouldn't have much to worry about in the next few months, apart from a few changes in game balancing.

In the game itself there is very little lag which, considering you can have dozens of ships in any one sector, I find frankly amazing. In terms of graphics, *Allegiance* is up there with the best of them. The ships are well designed and distinct and the effects far

outshine any other online game to date. Whether it's worth buying is down to a number of factors. If you're a fan of space combat and prepared to put the time in *Allegiance* will reward you with months of online play and, as a team-based game, *Allegiance* is in a league of its own – the more people playing, the better it will be. Your space fleet needs you. Join today. **PCZ**

PCZVERDICT

UPPERS Teamplay on an epic scale

- Original blend of action and strategy
- Hardly any lag

DOWNERS Cluttered HUD display • Difficult to learn

82 A new breed of online game

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P200
Memory 32Mb RAM **ALSO REQUIRES**
1Mb Video card. LAN or Internet connection **WE SAY** Direct 3D compatible graphics card essential on those specs. 56K modem also required



Ships are sleek and simple, but you'll rarely get this close.



The pyrotechnics are as good as any offline game.

FOR A FEW DOLLARS MORE

Normally when you buy an online game the developer will milk your account, swiping away a small stack of dollars every month just so you can play the game, even when you are no longer playing the damn thing. With *Allegiance* you don't have to. 'Free' *Allegiance* games offer three sides to play with and games with up to six teams of 15 players each. Once you're up to speed, then it's time to hand over your US\$10 a month, for which you have the option to fly for a fourth faction called the Belters, get involved in games with hundreds of players, and have your escapades logged on to the worldwide ranking system. *Allegiance Zone* players can also set up their own squadrons and Microsoft has promised to add new ships, technologies and storylines to the game as and when they're ready.

www.JustGames.net



SWITCH

[illegible]

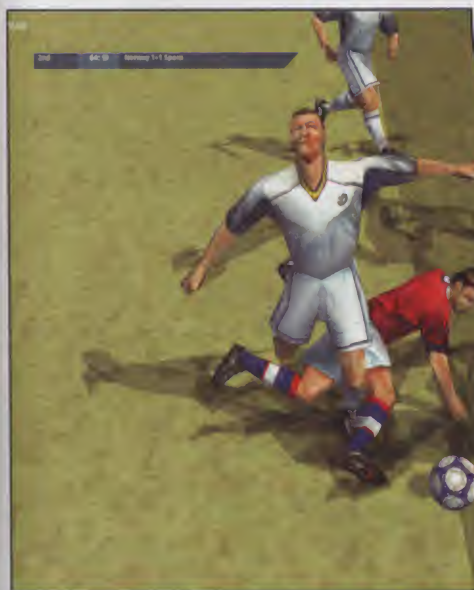
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Some kind of fancy face technology has been used, unfortunately not to recreate actual players.

Players still run in a bizarrely hunched fashion.



Not the most orthodox tackle.



Hopefully this will never happen again.



The replay enables you to actually see the goal attempt.

EURO 2000

★ £34.99 • EA Sports • Out now

Another FIFA game, another pay day for Steve Hill

Reviewing games is a thankless task at the best of times, and one that is made none the easier when companies insist on releasing the same game every six months. By companies we of course mean EA Sports, who has foisted the umpteenth version of its football game upon us to coincide with the minor festivities taking place in the Netherlands and Belgium this summer. That they were going to do this was one of the greatest certainties in the world of interactive entertainment, and we are only surprised that they didn't see fit to squeeze in a *Road To Euro 2000* in the meantime.

Qualification for the main tournament is a prerequisite here

though, enabling England fans to re-enact the combined fumbings of Messrs Hoddle and Keegan. The misery of defeat in Sweden, the mind-numbing scoreless draw against Bulgaria, the hammering of Luxembourg, they're all subject

“The main beef is with the camera, which seems to lag behind the action at times”

to historical revisionism as you cruise through to the finals, hopefully without recourse to a brace of turgid play-offs against the Scots. Should you grow bored of playing the same teams, the draw can be randomised, enabling you to attempt qualification in a parallel universe. So as you reach the finals, instead of Romania,

Portugal and Germany, a bunch of different teams await you. Why they couldn't include an option to re-enact the tournament proper is a mystery.

SAME AGAIN

If nothing else, it simply serves to underline what a relatively weak licence the European Championship is. That's all *Euro*

2000 has to offer over *FIFA 2000* though as, in terms of gameplay, this is of course the same game. In fact, if anything, it's worse as a couple of niggles have arisen which, if they were present in previous incarnations, we certainly didn't notice them. The main beef is with the camera, which seems to lag behind the

action at times, a phenomenon viewers of *Nationwide League Extra* will be familiar with. As that programme's commentator often says, “That shot was too quick for the goalkeeper – and our cameraman.” In *Euro 2000*, a ball whipped into the area will often disappear out of view. This makes attempting a header or a shot something of a lottery, with the camera only catching up when the ball is either nestling in the net or has been cleared to safety. A further gripe occurs when the opposition has a goal kick, as the computer initially only enables you to take control of one of the forwards, the other of whom often strays into an offside position.

Other than that, it's business as usual, although the *Euro* licence makes for fewer options than in *FIFA 2000*, as obviously there are no club sides. It's a perfectly playable game, but if you own any of the previous four incarnations, you don't need it. But you already knew that. [X]

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P200 Memory 32Mb RAM **WE SAY** P400, 64Mb RAM, 8Mb Direct3D compatible accelerator card

IN PERSPECTIVE

It may have won the Supertest, but an extended bout of the PlayStation's *ISS Pro Evolution* shows up *FIFA* for the charlatan it really is. For the price of the last five *FIFA* titles (essentially the same game), you'd have change from a PlayStation and a copy of *ISS*.

FIFA 98: Road To World Cup

World Cup 98

FIFA 99

FIFA 2000

Euro 2000

PCZ VERDICT

UPPERS Well established gameplay • Meticulous presentation • Decent graphics • Excellent commentary • Oakenfold in the mix

DOWNERS Limited longevity • Same as it ever was

70 Same old, same old



LEMMINGS



From a level appropriately titled 'How Do We Get Up There!'



Zooming makes selection more accurate.



Get your lemmings into the balloon to escape.

★ £29.99 • Take 2 Interactive • Out now

In order to prepare for this review, James Lyon climbed on to the edge of the roof and (insert obvious gag here)

Back in the early '90s, at a time when the Amiga was still a viable gaming platform, DMA Design released *Lemmings* to a surprisingly acclaimed response. Critics applauded its excellence as it scooped up many a Game of the Year nomination and it made the conversion to as many formats as was profitably possible. Then came the inevitable data disk, the sequels, and – the mark of most high-selling games – a spin-off, which was far removed from what made the original good in the first place. Mario may have the magic touch when it comes to this area, but playing paintball with lemmings wasn't most people's idea of a good time. So the series began plummeting in popularity and dying an early death, a bit like (ha ha) a lemming diving off a cliff. Shame.

But, wait! No! Who'd have thought? Nine years after the original, they're back. And we're back, in familiar territory, that is. Take 2 Interactive readily admits (well, in so many words) that the aforementioned sequels weren't exactly good and its new developer, Tarantula Studios, has thus put it upon themselves to capture the essence of what made the original special.

So how does it play, then? Before I answer that, let's take into consideration those unfortunates who've never had the chance to play the original. Well, I'm hoping that's someone's case, otherwise the next part is rather pointless. If it doesn't apply to you, feel free to skip (in time-honoured paragraph-skipping tradition), to the next paragraph – it's nothing you haven't heard before. But, before you do, just bear in mind, that it does relate in

some way to the final score. OK, then. Let's go.

WHAT BE THIS LEMMINGS?

Lemmings fall from trapdoor. Lemmings don't stop walking. Assign tasks to lemmings to keep them out of danger. Guide them to safety. All of which makes it sound more simple than it actually is. Oh, it starts out easily enough. Almost insultingly easy, in fact. But getting towards the later levels, the difficulty factor starts to shoot up faster than Speedy Gonzalez on crack. You can start a level, stare at it for ages and still not figure out the best route to take, even though, as with most great puzzles, the solution is often found staring you in the face. Sometimes, you'll methodically plot a long complex strategy only to find it's distracting you from an extremely simple solution elsewhere. It's always perfectly logical, but try saying that when you have a wall to get past and all you've got is a blocker. It wouldn't surprise me if the level designers had 'poking baby chicks in the eyes' under the interests section of their CV.

Despite all that, it's still addictive and the feeling you get when you do actually manage to get the required number of lemmings home, can often be one of extreme satisfaction and accomplishment. There are 102 levels in all, although I've been told the bonus levels purported in the previews have been abandoned. Still quite a challenge, though.

GO ON, TELL ME HOW IT PLAYS, THEN

Almost exactly the same as the original *Lemmings*. Except in a tower (Nebulus, shouts someone). By holding the right mouse button and moving left or right you can rotate your tower through 360 degrees. It's a nice idea and one that allows for easier scrolling as you try to perform the correct action at the right time. One small complaint though, is a tendency for foreground objects to sometimes obscure parts of the screen. Although this is more of an annoyance than an actual detriment to play, as the tower can be scrolled to achieve a different view. Apart from that,

it's business as usual. Except that's a bit of a lie too. As well as the new dangers of boxing kangaroos, giant birds, and crabs, which are exactly the same as the old traps (strategy: don't walk into them), there are now three new types of lemmings to contend with. Water, lava and what looks like acid lemmings (manual... missing) can all walk safely across the respective surfaces. They all seem to blend in so comfortably that it strangely feels as if they've always been there.

Later levels aside, the developers really have gone back to basics with this one, adhering to the original's template as closely as possible. And if you've played the first one you'll remember its faults. Namely, the pixel-perfect positioning and difficulty in selecting an exact lemming, and the 50-50 chance of picking one going in the right direction. Rest assured that the developers have listened, and attempted to rectify the situation, refining the improvements of *All New World Of Lemmings*. Firstly, you can issue commands while

REvolution



You spin me right round, baby right round. Like a tower, baby...



Everyone loves a good explosion.



Teleporters get a look in, too.



Those gates speed up your lemming for a little while.



Haven't got a clue how to do this one.



All the lemmings of the rainbow. Well, three.



Levels branch out giving you various routes to the end.



Expect to click on this, a lot.



We've got the power to build the highest tower.

WALKTHROUGH

LEMMINGS

Efficiency and progress is ours once more...



1 I've got to get the lemming on the right in order to build a bridge onto the platform above the water. Meanwhile, turned by a blocker, the other lemmings head towards the switch...



2 ...which drains the water. The blocker explodes to make way for the others as another bridge is built from the pool bottom and the obstructing wall is bashed through. Notice the flames obscuring the scene, though.



3 Now all there is to do is build a couple of bridges up there and we're home free. Hang on... those stupid lemmings... they've built that last one too low. How dare they!



4 That'll teach them. Thank goodness for that Nuke button. Where would the game be without it? It's nice to know that the spirit of antipathy is alive and well in computer games.

the game is paused. Secondly, because of the curved nature of the platforms, it's possible to pick out the direction of each lemming even when two walk past each other. By moving the cursor to one side or the other you can highlight the lemming heading in your desired direction. Last of all, there's a zoom function, which allows you to pick out your lemmings far more easily among the confusion. While all this seems unnecessary at first, the latter levels positively encourage it for

OUT WITH THE OLD, IN WITH THE, ER, OLD

So what to make of the game? It goes without saying that the original was a classic. There was a reason why it picked up so many commendations, and that's not going to go away anytime soon. To the uninitiated, since *Lemmings Revolution* is so similar to its roots, anyone who wants to experience the phenomenon would be perfectly happy with either. Personally, I'd go for the older one, as apart from the jolly title tune, the

original all over again. If you haven't already, your best bet is to seek out a copy of *Lemmings 2: The Tribes* (not *Lemmings 3D*, mind), as that game contains a more distinctive advance on the series than what's on offer here.

It's a tricky game to score, the *Lemmings* fad seems to be at the stage where the franchise hasn't quite faded into obscurity, but also isn't part of any nostalgic revival, either. It's possible that the game may have gone down better if it was released a couple of years later, but it seems a little unnecessary for most. Thus, I'm going to take the series' history into account and mark it accordingly.

One last note, there's only one save game slot, so (if you don't resort to messing around with files in the operating system) expect the not-so-hilarious consequences when someone else decides to start a new game without telling you. [C]

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor PII 300
Memory 64MB RAM **WE SAY** PII 500
and a Voodoo 2

IN PERSPECTIVE

There were a lot of similar games like this one when it first came out. Remember *Troddlers*? *Gruntz* was quite recent, but also rubbish. *Abe's Oddysee* works in the same area of trial and error logic.

Lemmings Revolution

Gruntz

Abe's Oddysee

Lemmings

PCZVERDICT

UPPERS Addictive • Challenging

• Still a great concept.

DOWNERS Difficult • Frustrating

• Poor music • Er, haven't we seen it all before?

57 More remake than revolution

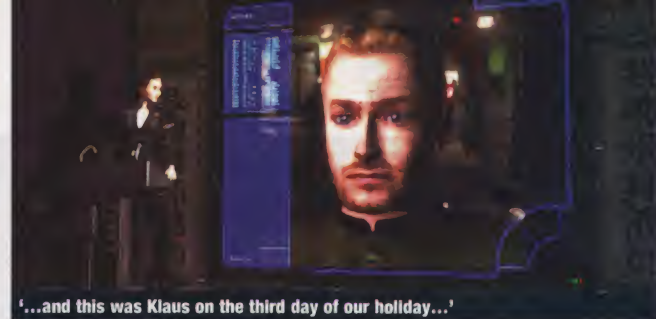
“The developers really have gone back to basics with this one, adhering to the original's template as closely as possible”

those whose reflexes aren't exactly at their sharpest.

But even with all these aids it's still mostly a matter of trial and error, and now the game's earned the title of royalty in the computer games world. You see, many's the time people have been heard to shout 'King Lemmings!' at the computer screen as they restart a level for the 15th time.

fantastically warped music of the former has been replaced in this version with a handful of uninspiring tunes, which do nothing to complement the game. Shame again.

But for those people who have played before, this comes across as nothing more than a data disk with slightly nicer graphics. For the most part, you're playing the



STARLANCER

★ £34.99 • Microsoft • Out now

When PC ZONE needed a Star Fighter to review *StarLancer*, Martin Korda was the man for the job. Or did they mean Staff Writer?



It's been almost five years since Chris Roberts' last game, *Wing Commander IV*, hit the shelves. The *WC* series always prided itself on pushing back existing boundaries in computer gaming, and inspired many of us to spend our hard-earned cash on a hardware upgrade, so we could play the latest instalment. Yes it had its detractors, notably fans of the *X-Wing* series, but no one could argue that it tried to do something new: mix an interactive movie with varied space combat missions. Since those ambitious days, we've seen the likes of *FreeSpace 2* and *X - Beyond The Frontier* become the new benchmarks of the genre, moving away from FMV and concentrating more on the combat (or in *X's* case, trading) side of things. After starting their own development house, Digital Anvil, Roberts and co have produced their own contender for the top spot,

StarLancer. But is it something different or just a spin off of the *Wing Commander* series?

Let's face it, an original idea comes along about as often as a solar eclipse, which anyone with even a hint of astronomical awareness knows isn't all that often. So don't be surprised when I tell you that you're not going to find anything particularly new when you play *StarLancer's* single-player campaign. Before you start sending me letters of indignation, telling me that this is the greatest space game ever, calm down and read on a little. No, *StarLancer* isn't original, but it is, for the most part, very good. So, now that that's sorted out, let's see what *StarLancer* has to offer in terms of gameplay.

TELL US A STORY

StarLancer is a mixed bag of the generally excellent and the occasionally inadequate. The intro fills you with anticipation, setting the scene brilliantly. It all revolves around the Alliance (a thinly disguised version of Nato) and the Coalition (you guessed it, the Russians), vying for control of the Milky Way in the not so distant future. Unsurprisingly, during the

proposed signing of a peace treaty, the evil Coalition launch an attack on Alliance forces, sending them into full retreat. Due to the desperate need for pilots, the Coalition recruits civilian volunteers, and that's where you come in. You're a member of the rookie 45th Volunteers Squadron, and you must help the Alliance fight off the Coalition aggressors (stop me if any of this is sounding a bit familiar). The scene is now set for a titanic battle to save your side from annihilation, with the plot furthered throughout the game by means of news reports and the occasional cut-scene.

BLINK AND YOU'LL MISS IT

When the pretty cinematics are over, it's time to get to grips with flying and fighting. This is done in the sim pod, which leads you through the basics step by step. If you're confident that you can fly (and believe me, those of you who've played the *Wing Commander* games should be as the controls are pretty similar), then you can take on wave upon wave of enemy fighters by selecting the Instant Action option.

The first thing that strikes you is just how fast *StarLancer* is. It's more arcadey than a simulation, with droves of enemy craft bearing down on you, and very little time to dispose of them. After playing *FreeSpace 2* and *X - BTF*, it's striking just how much of

an adrenaline rush the combat in *StarLancer* provides, both in the sim pod and in the actual campaign missions. You don't have time to think, you've just got to fly on pure instinct.

PREPPED, PRIMED, LOADED, LOCKED

Once you feel confident enough with your piloting ability, it's time to tackle your first mission. After a detailed briefing, you're taken to the ship selection and weapons load-out screen, reminiscent of (you guessed it) *Wing Commander IV*. At first you only have four fighters to choose from, but by the end of the game you're given a selection of 12. The

“It's striking just how much of an adrenaline rush the combat in *StarLancer* provides. You've just got to fly on pure instinct”

variety and quality of ships is excellent and should cater for the flying style of every type of pilot, whether you're swift, fearless and deadly, or slow, cack-handed and easily confused by fast moving vehicles. There's also a host of

weaponry to equip your ship with, and, if you don't pay enough attention to the mission objectives outlined in the briefing, you'll probably choose the wrong missiles for the job. Do this, and you'll really struggle to complete certain key objectives.

IF YOU WANT SOMETHING DONE...

So, you've practiced in the sim pod, listened to and digested your mission objectives and selected your ship and weapons accordingly. Now it's time to mix things up in the vacuum. In no time at all you've raced through the first five missions and you're left thinking you're a one (wo)man army. The worrying thing is, you pretty much are, but fortunately things do get harder after about mission five. One of the biggest criticisms I have of *StarLancer* is the lack of teamwork, the lack of any feeling that your squadron care about you, or even know you exist. Too often all you seem to get is your wing leader bleating a stream of orders at you, telling you to hurry up killing those nine enemy fighters, while fending off a wave of bombers and protecting your capital ships from any torpedoes. If you don't do it, it's rare that someone else will.

However, on the flip side, if it wasn't for all these objectives, the game would be too easy. Some of the enemy flying is laughable on



Some missions require you to shoot down torpedoes before they hit your ships. Be careful not to get too close.



An enemy warp gate drifts too near to the sun.

IN PERSPECTIVE

If you're looking for depth of gameplay, go for *X - Beyond The Frontier*. For those who prefer action, then *FreeSpace 2* is still the best around. Story line wise, *X-Wing Alliance* just gets the nod, but if you're looking for great multiplayer fun, *StarLancer* is the one for you.

StarLancer

X - Beyond the Frontier

FreeSpace 2

X-Wing Alliance

easy and medium levels, although this does improve considerably on the hardest difficulty setting. Paradoxically though, their teamwork is superb as they try to suck you away from the carriers you're protecting, in order to give their bombers a clear run at your unprotected capital ships.

You're provided with a co-pilot, who tells you when you've been locked on to, and when you should consider running away. Not only is this helpful, it also goes some way to rectifying the problem of little or no teamwork from your squadron.

GROUP FUN

One of *StarLancer's* strongest features is its open-ended nature. Many missions have more than one objective, and most of them provide you with the chance to take the initiative to complete secondary tasks, not stated in your mission outline. If you're ordered to blow up an enemy warp gate, but a Coalition carrier jumps in just as you've finished your mission, then it's up to you to instigate an attack and take it out. The decisions you make affect



You'll find yourself stumbling across Coalition convoys, ripe for the picking.

your promotional chances as well as the war's progress, all of which will be conveyed in news reports.

StarLancer's lack of rigidity also paves the way for its excellent multiplayer co-operative option, something which has been sadly lacking from other titles in the genre. You and three friends can play together through the campaign, or up to eight of you can play against each other in a deathmatch. The multiplayer option makes *StarLancer* come alive, because it overcomes the game's major shortcomings in terms of teamwork, especially if you can play over a network.

SOMETHING BORROWED, SOMETHING NEW

It's true that much of *StarLancer* mimics existing titles. The storyline is tense, but never ground-breaking; the combat is fast-paced, but similar to that of previous Chris Roberts space sims; the missions are usually either search and destroy, rescue or escort runs; and the AI isn't going to win any awards for innovation. Even though it copies, it manages to do so very well and,

while much of *StarLancer* is done by numbers, it's the option to play with other people that sets it apart from its competitors.

StarLancer is well worth buying, but if you're a fan of space sims, be prepared for a heavy dosage of *déjà vu*. Link up with your friends though, and you're in for a great new experience. **PCZ**

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P200
Memory 32Mb **ALSO REQUIRES**
x8Mb CD-ROM Drive, 2Mb graphics card
WE SAY PII300, 8Mb graphics card
and 64Mb RAM

PCZ VERDICT

UPPERS Fast paced adrenaline-pumping combat • Co-operative and deathmatch multiplayer options • Open-ended missions

DOWNERS Lack of teamwork • Nothing new in the single-player game • Occasionally poor enemy AI

81 Nothing particularly new, but a superb blast nonetheless

WALKTHROUGH

TO KILL A MOCKING COALITION PILOT

Choose your weapons, learn how use them properly, and the boys from the Coalition will be doomed...



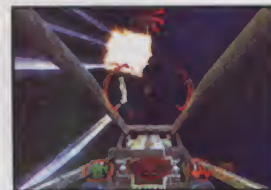
1 The first thing you have to take into consideration is what ship and weapons load out you want. Choose the craft that best suits your flying style, then equip it with a good balance of missiles, so that you're prepared for any eventuality.



2 Configure the fighter to your liking. Decide how much of your ship's power you want to allocate to engines, weapons and shields. To do this, press 'P' and move the joystick in the direction of your preferred option. Use 'G' to select your gun set up.



3 Your weapon systems are effective when a target is around 100km away. It's often best to use missiles with lock capabilities. Use the 'M', 'comma' and 'full stop' keys to select a missile type, wait for a white circle around the target, then fire.



4 When it starts getting more up close and personal, switch to dumb fire missiles such as Screammers. They have no tracking system, so only use them when you're close to your opponent. Aim just in front of their flight path and let loose five or six at once.



5 You won't win any missions if you can't use your guns properly. The on-board computer will give you a best guess marker, but don't rely solely on this. Get in close to the enemy, and focus your fire on one side of their craft to take them out in the shortest time.



6 If you've followed all of these instructions properly, then the boys from the Coalition will have no chance whatsoever, and they should end up looking something like this. However, fly stupidly, and this will be their view of you instead.

TACHYON: THE FRINGE

★ £34.99 • NovaLogic • Out now



The graphics occasionally let the game down.

You get a pretty warping cut-scene every time you... warp.

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P133MMX (P200 without 3D card) **Memory** 16Mb **ALSO REQUIRES** Glide 3 drivers for 3dfx chipset **WE SAY** P200, 32Mb RAM and an 8Mb 3D graphics card

With *StarLancer* doing the rounds, the last thing we need is another run-of-the-mill space combat sim. But, whatever you do, don't just give *Tachyon's* score a cursory glance and turn to the next page because you'd be doing the game a gross injustice.

The above praise is directed at the game's attempt to be freeform. In the game you take on the role of a mercenary pilot exiled to the Fringe (the outskirts of charted space) for a crime you didn't commit and, like an intergalactic prostitute, you must rebuild your life by selling your services to the highest bidder. This allows you to pick jobs that best suit you. It also allows you to choose which of the game's two opposing forces you want to support – the GalSpan or the Bora.

As you progress, the story develops in different ways, depending on which faction your sympathies lie with. You get to upgrade your ship and its weapons as you

accumulate money from successfully completed missions. However, there is one major downside to *Tachyon*: enemy pilots fly far too sluggishly and subsequently the combat never gets your pulse racing. Veterans of space combat games certainly won't be overstretched by many of the missions, but *Tachyon's* greatest strength lies in its multiplayer options. More than 100 players can hook up over the Net or up to 32 on a network. Two teams battle each other in a race to develop level ten weaponry, the only firepower that can eliminate the other team's base – this adds some much needed immediacy. There's also the obligatory deathmatch mode.

Overall, *Tachyon* offers a relatively original twist to the space combat genre, and the online options are great, especially the Base Wars online game, which we'll be covering in greater detail in a future issue. It's just a shame that it's let down by a slightly shallow and unexciting combat system, and some occasionally below par graphics.

Martin Korda

PCZVERDICT

68%

SIMCITY WORLD EDITION

★ £34.99 • Electronic Arts • Out now

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P200MMX **Memory** 32Mb RAM **WE SAY** PII 300, and don't even consider less than 64 Mb RAM. A graphics accelerator would be preferable

Megalomaniacs everywhere will rejoice in this upgraded version of *SimCity 3000*. Despite the undoubted brilliance of the original (it scored 84 per cent in *PC ZONE's* review), there was always that nagging thought: 'Yeah, OK, but once my city's up and running, what else can I do?'

Now the answer is: plenty. For starters, there's the Building Architect, where you have free rein to design anything from a bungalow to a ziggurat for use in the game. In addition, Maxis has provided different city styles – at the press of a button, you can convert your city into an Oriental paradise, or a European *stadt* complete with windmills and extra landmarks, such as Helsinki Cathedral. Also, terrain can be freely edited before you build your city, and there are landscape options (such as desert or arctic) with different trees.

There's a choice of mission-based scenarios (such as recovering from a

nuclear disaster), and even the option to write your own scripts with the Scenario Creator (be warned, though, it's complicated) and share them with friends over the Net. For those despots – sorry, Mayors – with a nihilistic streak there are four new disasters: Toxic Cloud, Whirlpool, Plague of Locusts and Space Junk (my favourite). There's even a Snapshot option so that you can commemorate the destruction of your Sims in a photo album.

If all this sounds like heaven, here's the bad news: if you already own *SimCity 3000*, you're going to have to buy the game again to enjoy all the new features (although the Building Architect is downloadable from the official website). At present, there is no sign of an upgrade pack for existing users, and *World Edition* appears to be aimed principally at new players. But who wants to shell out twice for the same game? It leaves me with a sour taste, and many other loyal fans will probably feel the same.

Alison Baker

PCZVERDICT

70%



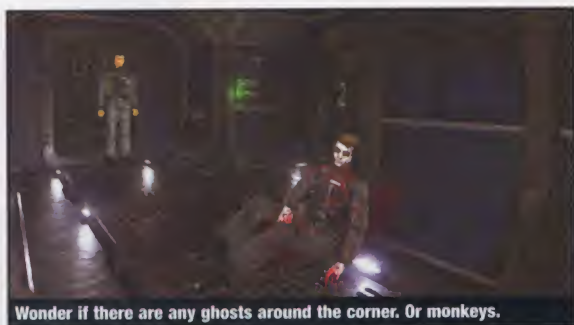
Develop your spatial skills with the Building Architect.



The Sims work together for a cleaner, healthier environment.



A peaceful Danish town is rudely awakened by flying space junk.



Wonder if there are any ghosts around the corner. Or monkeys.

MARTIAN GOTHIC

★ £29.99 • Take 2 Interactive • Out now

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P266 Memory 32Mb RAM **ALSO REQUIRES** 3D card
WE SAY Sounds excessive for what you get

Mars is all the rage at the moment, and we're not talking about a new limited edition orange-flavoured chocolate bar. There are two big blockbuster films, one already released, the other coming out in the summer, and now one mediocre little game. The best way to describe *Martian Gothic* is as a rip-off of *Resident Evil* (graphics, zombies) and *System Shock 2* (story, atmosphere), only infinitely inferior to both.

You control three characters on a Mars station where something strange has happened, leaving dead crew strewn around rooms and corridors or turned into zombies (sound familiar?). The backgrounds are well drawn, but your men move around like badly animated marionettes.

The monsters do the most stupid things imaginable and they have to chew on your head for more than ten minutes before you die, while the awful dialogue is only matched by the acting. There is a game to get into here, but it's hardly worth bothering with the PlayStation version, never mind on your slick, ninja PC.

Mark Hill

PCZVERDICT

40%

TEST DRIVE 6

★ £29.99 • Infogrames • Out now

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P233 Memory 32Mb RAM
ALSO REQUIRES 4Mb 3D graphics card **WE SAY** PII266, 64Mb RAM and 8Mb 3D card

There's no sadder sight than watching a once great sports person competing well past their peak, and drifting off into obscure mediocrity. The same can be said for games. I've been a follower of the *Test Drive* series for 12 years now, and the last few titles have been regurgitations of the same ideas with slightly nicer looking graphics.

TD6 has unfortunately followed this trend, and shows that the series is well past its best. You must buy yourself a sports car and compete in one-off races and tournaments, while avoiding the police and earning enough money to either upgrade your vehicle or buy a new one. You can't damage your car, so it's easy to just plough around the circuits and

knock everyone out of your way, which, although unrealistic, is quite fun purely from a sadistic point of view. The cars handle more like hovercraft/dodgem car hybrids than obscenely powerful sports cars, and the collision detection is erratic at best. On the plus side it does provide plenty of fast paced and mindless driving fun.

TD6 can best be described as a lesser version of *Midtown Madness*. What a shame then that Cryo has missed the opportunity of adding split-screen or Internet multiplayer options. If you still love the *Test Drive* series or easy to learn driving games, then you'll enjoy this for a while, but there are plenty of better racing games available to spend your money on.

Martin Korda

PCZVERDICT

43%



See what I mean? A bloody hovercraft.

NASCAR 2000

★ £34.99 • EA SPORTS • Out now

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P266 Memory 32Mb RAM **ALSO REQUIRES** 2Mb PCI or AGP video card **WE SAY** A P400, 64Mb RAM and a decent 3D card

I feel a pile up coming on.

PC games are increasingly resembling an interactive version of Channel 5's night-time output, and to add further weight to this theory we've got another NASCAR title on our hands. For the uninitiated, NASCAR is the American motor sport that involves heavily moustached men with names like Rusty Wallace and Ricky Rudd driving anti-clockwise

around an oval track for the best part of a day.

Of course, NASCAR games have been around for years, courtesy of Papyrus and, to the untrained eye, EA Sports' attempt is much the same thing, if slightly more arcadey.

Either way, very few right turns are required, and if ever a driving game required a steering wheel this is it, as large parts of each circuit are spent locked in a turn, something that proves irksome with either a joystick or keyboard.

But if you can really be arsed with it and can come to terms with driving round in circles for hours on end, there is some value to be had here, with a host of tracks and some fairly hardcore attention to detail. One abortive passing manoeuvre can take several laps to rectify, so concentration is paramount, and at even ten per cent of the track length, it's enough to induce mild hallucinations. To play the game in full simulation mode, you'd clearly have to be inordinately lonely or serving a medium term prison sentence.

Even though it's supposed to be a non-contact sport, it's often all too tempting to nudge a rival car into the wall, if only to watch the ensuing carnage in the rear view mirror. When it happens to you though, it can be annoying and you will find yourself restarting more races than you finish. Only patient drivers need apply.

Steve Hill

PCZVERDICT

64%



NASCAR 2000 has some real hardcore attention to detail.



Around we go again.





Total Soccer 2000



Actua Soccer 3



PCZ SUPERTEST FOOTBALL GAMES

The Beautiful Game has produced some beautiful games over the years, not to mention some absolute stinkers. With this in mind, we assembled a panel of experts to sort out the Barcelonas from the Barnestoneworths. Today's referee is *Steve Hill*

Almost since the advent of video games there have been countless attempts to replicate the national sport. Even back when fans used to stand up to watch the match (and run home to avoid the kicking), a steady flow of primitive football games appeared on the systems of the day. So why the enduring preoccupation with football? The simple answer is because it's great, and anyone who disagrees is wrong. More than that though, it's the perfect accoutrement for the armchair sportsman. Whereas hoofing a ball around Hackney Marshes of a Sunday morning is certainly a

commendable activity, there are times when common sense dictates you eschew the outside world in favour of a warm pad, a selection of pastry items and some cold drinks.

There are many factors that go towards developing a football game, and pinning down what makes a decent one is a slippery business. After all, you're essentially working within parameters that have been established for centuries. At the end of the day, it's only ever going to be a game of two halves, eleven against eleven, anything can happen on the day and it only takes a second to score a goal...

Ⓜ Back row L to R: Dave Woods is a long-suffering Coventry City fan, and once told his girlfriend (very unwisely) that relegation would be worse than them splitting up. Ⓜ New boy Martin Korda has professed an unfounded lifelong support of Liverpool, and flits his shirt like Emile Heskey. Ⓜ Steve Hill has reviewed every game here, and as a Chester City fan has just endured the most traumatic season of his life. Ⓜ Front row L to R: Portsmouth fan Richie Shoemaker went to Barcelona, once, and liked the shirt so much he bought one. Ⓜ Confused Mark Hill is from Wigan via Majorca, and today sports the colours of Real Madrid. Ⓜ Keith Pullin is a lapsed Portsmouth fan, for whom things once got so bad that he went to watch Southampton.

PHOTOGRAPHY Simon Day OFFSHORE PIXELS PC

← TOTAL SOCCER 2000

Steve: I think it's a total disgrace. There's no place for an overhead football game in this day and age.

Richie: Rubbish. So there's no space for *Sensi* then?

Steve: *Sensible*'s part of history. You don't ever play *Sensible*, you just think about it.

Keith: I felt like playing it again though after playing *Total Soccer* – it's given me a taste for it.

Steve: You would go back to *Sensible* now?

Keith: Yeah.

Steve: Do you think it would be better than *Total Soccer*?

Keith: Yeah, much better. *Total Soccer* is a pale imitation.

Richie: (Wistfully) Leading Old Dear's Menu (*comedy Sensi* team) to the top of the league.

Mark: *Total Soccer* has a passing resemblance to football.

Martin: The thing is, what about people who play football who just want a football game without all the offsidings and everything? They just want a bit of arcade action, it's perfect for that kind of thing.

Richie: It's simple – one button.

Steve: But it isn't simple, your players don't control the ball, they just run about like... flies.

Martin: There is actually a fair amount of skill in trapping the ball and controlling it.

Richie: The only thing that was wrong with *Sensible Soccer*, when they brought out the '98 version or whatever, was the graphics.

Steve: *Total Soccer* looks worse than the first *Sensible Soccer*.

Martin: It does.

Richie: That's just because you're looking back.

Keith: They haven't got big goggle eyes though.

Martin: It looks like they're chasing a golf ball around.

Steve: *Sensible Soccer* had a proper look about it, they had mad

eyes and big grins. That was half the appeal. In *Total Soccer*, they're not even footballers, they might as well just be dots.

Mark: They're just dots chasing an even smaller dot. Not chasing it very well either, when I'm playing.

Keith: It brings into play the basic essence of football, which is skill and instinct.

Mark: Rubbish.

Keith: Football is not about getting an aching thumb from playing *FIFA 2000*.

Mark: You just said you had an aching thumb from playing *Total Soccer*.

Keith: *FIFA* brought it on.

Everyone: (Laughs)

Keith: *FIFA*'s just fingers and thumbs all over the place. It's always been the same, it always will be the same, just tapping the buttons, random button presses.

Steve: So how does that differ in *Total Soccer* then? You just run everywhere aimlessly.

Keith: *Total Soccer* does have a random element to it because it's so difficult to play. You could never do the same thing twice really, apart from dribble

round everybody on the pitch and score in the corner.

Steve: Exactly. When I played it every goal was John Barnes in the Maracana Stadium – take on the entire defence, put it in the corner. I don't think I've ever seen another goal apart from by the computer.

Keith: It's true, if you can dribble around everyone then you can



STEVE HILL
CHESTER CITY

pretty much score every time, so I stand corrected on that.

Mark: It's crap, OK?

Steve: Is that anyone's favourite game here, *Total Soccer 2000*?

Martin: No.

Keith: But you can't say it's not fun.

Steve: So for, like, 20 quid you'd recommend it to someone.

Richie: I'd wait for it to come down to a tenner.

Mark: Would you play it against the computer though?

Richie: Well, no, it's a two-player game, basically.

Steve: Actually, I started playing a

season once and it died a death.

Richie: It's a pointless game.

Dave Woods enters room following a protracted telephone conversation with Pizza Hut.

Dave: They're gonna come in half an hour, and you are going to experience The Edge.

Steve: Dave, *Total Soccer 2000*? Keith likes it, Richie doesn't mind

“It's just a karaoke version of *Sensible Soccer*”

STEVE DISMISSES *TOTAL SOCCER 2000* AS A WORTHLESS CHARLATAN

it, I think it's a waste of time...

Dave: The thing is, you get bored after about half an hour, but it's good fun, simple, and you know what you're doing. Loads of the other games are too complicated. And there was more oohs and aahs coming from this one.

Richie: That's because there's no commentary, you have to make it up yourself.

Dave: It's really reminiscent of *Sensi*.

Steve: It's just a karaoke version of *Sensible Soccer*.

Everyone: (Laughs)

Keith: The only reason we're playing it is because we can't get *Sensi* to load.

Dave: I haven't played a game like that since *Sensi*, and just the one touch passing, every pass goes to a player...

Mark: Not with me it doesn't, it goes out of play.

Martin: I didn't find that, every time I passed it ended up with his bloody player and he'd score.

Richie: It's a good two player game but, you know, brainless.

Dave: £19.99, it's cheap.

Steve: As you say, you get bored in an hour, so is someone going to pay 20 quid for an hour's fun?

Richie: You have an hour here and an hour there.

Steve: You'd come back for a different hour at a different time?

Richie: An hour a day. Lunch hour. No, it's a crap one-player game, the graphics are bad, the gameplay is timeless.

Steve: So that's nobody's winner.

Martin: It's definitely not the worst game here.

Keith: It's still too expensive at £20.

Steve: I think it should be shareware. I think that's originally how they started, they just did it for fun and thought they'd sell it. And clearly didn't because I don't recall seeing it in any charts.

Dave: It did very well in Scandinavia.

INTERNATIONAL FOOTBALL 2000

Dave: There's some really bad faults, like if the ball's in the air and you go to head it, the player just floats until the ball arrives. You get into volleyball, you head the ball and someone else heads it and you just keep doing that.

Steve: Head tennis. I found tackling was odd. But when I reviewed it I played it for weeks for some reason, and it was great.

Dave: It is a half decent game – the shooting's not bad.

Steve: You actually have to aim. The keepers never move off their line though, but are incredibly good so you get loads of corners.

Mark: I don't see the point of aiming when you're moving sideways. How do you aim when



TOTAL SOCCER 2000

Something of a step back in time, *Total Soccer* flies in the face of many of today's ultra-realistic 3D action games, reverting to the overhead view that was popularised by the magnificent *Sensible Soccer*. A cheap and cheerful affair, it's far more suited to a quick blast than any long-lasting relationship.

Score	60% PCZ #70
Developer	Iridon Interactive
Publisher	Iridon Interactive
Price	£19.99



A slightly more dynamic angle in the replay mode.



A return for overhead football in *Total Soccer 2000*.



That's McCabe of England, and Bouvier of France. Whooooo?



Despite its international pretensions, everyone tends to chase the ball like schoolboys.



Warm-ups are very important in computer football.

you're running sideways? If you're going to aim it, it should be in first person. They should make a first-person football game.

Steve: There was a shit game, *Three Lions* where you actually had a cursor.

Mark: Yeah, but that was just stupid.

Dave: There was quite an interesting game on PlayStation, *Libero Grande*, where you controlled just one player. But it didn't work, did it?

Steve: No, because you're not going to stand around for ten minutes waiting to get the ball.

Mark: When you pass the ball, the camera should be the ball, and then you're the next player.

Richie: Getting back to *International Football 2000*, it's good for keeping possession and building up moves.

Keith: It's really easy to pick up and play.

Martin: Really? I thought at the very beginning it was wretched and I didn't know what was going on. I didn't have control of it.

Steve: But you can learn it because I played it for weeks. There's a button that guarantees that your man gets the ball. If you hold in the shoulder and lump it he'll run under the ball and trap it every time, which means you can always keep moves going.

Mark: They just made it too hard to change the controls. You either have to keep the ones they've got or mess around. I changed all the controls to the ones from *FIFA* so I knew what I was doing, and none of them worked. Again, it should be like a first-person game, it should be really easy to set up how you want to play.

Steve: All football games should be exactly the same because, as we found today when swapping around, there was confusion.

Mark: If you move from one game to another, you're just pressing the wrong button all the time.

Steve: That was my excuse for losing at *FIFA*. Hang on, that's where we started, wasn't it? Well,

I'd been playing *Champions League* at home, that's why.

Mark: But I beat you at that as well.

Steve: Oh, for God's sake.

Anyway, the Microsoft game, do you think not having a licence makes a difference? Because it's got crap player names. Why did they bottle it? They're the biggest company in the world, I'm sure they can afford to bung a few quid to the FA.

Mark: Nobody wants to play a game where everybody's got stupid names.

Steve: I know, some bloke called Robinson with a Beckham hairstyle. It clearly is Beckham, so they've used a likeness, but they've not used the name.

Dave: A likeness?

Steve: Yeah, there's a physical likeness to some of the players. Well, there's a Flock Of Seagulls haircut on someone that might be Beckham.

Everyone: (Laughs)

Dave: You can download proper teams off their website though.

Mark: So then they might as well put it in the game.

Richie: The throw-ins and free kicks are ridiculous with that arrow you've got. It just never goes where you direct it.

Steve: Also, it's really busy, you can get 20 players in the area. It's like third division football.

Mark: You should know.

Richie: The replays are no good. Some of the goal celebrations are the worst I've ever seen.

Mark: Yeah, the replays are pathetic. You have to wait about five seconds until the replay happens and you can't skip it until the replay's started.

Martin: The commentator gets a bit over-excited.

Steve: Well it's Jonathan Pearce, isn't it, who did the original *SWOS*.

INTERNATIONAL FOOTBALL 2000

Following its abysmal entry into the football game genre with the risible *Microsoft Soccer*, it was a bold move for the big M to release another football game. It enlisted the services of *Rage*, and following a number of name changes, this generic title finally emerged. The world shrugged.

Score	85% PCZ #85
Developer	Rage
Publisher	Microsoft
Price	£34.99

Mark: He's a fool.

Steve: He was good in *Sensible*.

Dave: The thing is, he gets excited about the wrong things.

Mark (Shouting): OH! THE KICK OFF!

Everybody: (Laughs)



RICHIE SHOEMAKER
BARCELONA

Richie: You have this silence, then he suddenly goes 'ENGLAND... have got the ball.'

Dave: We should mention that this is the best game on the Dreamcast, in the shape of *UEFA Striker*.

Steve: Reviewed by myself, in fact. Eight out of ten. I thought it was OK on the Dreamcast. I think it's OK generally, it's just when

you first come to it, it's bewildering, but if you make yourself play it... it's average.

Dave: It's alright, but there's a big flaw with the head tennis.

Steve: Yeah, there's a lot of headers, there's no real players and replays are crap.

Richie: And the commentary's crap.

Dave: Controls are crap.

Steve: Has anyone got anything good to say about it?

Richie: I think the possession play is good.

Mark: The graphics are quite good. The interface is pretty good.

Dave: Didn't this used to be *Ruud Gullit's Striker*?

Richie: Yeah. They showed it at ECTS last year, and they were all chuffed that Newcastle had signed Ruud Gullit.

Dave: One of the developers does support Coventry, so I have to say that this game is absolutely superb.

"The replays are really bad and some of the goal celebrations are the worst I've ever seen"

MICROSOFT'S INTERNATIONAL FOOTBALL 2000 FAILS TO IMPRESS RICHIE

Steve: One of them supports Tranmere. The developers are a mixed bag of lower division supporters, and you can really tell you're playing lower division football. There's absolutely no finesse and you've got no time on the ball.

Mark: But it's called *International Football*.

Keith: It should be called *Conference League*.

Steve: Forget it.

ACTUAL SOCCER 3

Steve: The best commentary of any game. It revolutionised commentary in football games.

Richie: Commentary made that game. It was the first game to have decent commentary.

Mark: It's the closest to actual television commentary.

Steve: But Brookings's only got three things that he says.

Mark: And that's why it's like real TV.

Dave: The graphics are superb.

Mark: The original was the first 3D game, wasn't it? I remember seeing it the first time and I was just flabbergasted.

Steve: In the old days, Chris would play it every lunchtime.

Dave: We got completely hooked on *Euro 96*.

Martin: I thought it was quite a weak game, actually.

Steve: I think looking at it now, it's no great shakes.

Richie: Is there any side-stepping in it?

Steve: There are no tricks in it whatsoever.

Richie: I played it on PlayStation, and it was a bit pants.

Dave: You can't score inside the box, so you have to take shots from outside with loads of after touch. You can score some brilliant 30-yard screamers.

Steve: When I played it I had about 15 shots and one of them just happened to go in, but I did nothing different.

Mark: There's nothing more annoying in football games than when you're in front of the goal and you just can't score because it's impossible.

Steve: You had Ronaldo on the edge of the six-yard box how many times? I wasn't even looking because I knew he was going to save it. You might get a lucky rebound, but it's very rare.

Dave: Set pieces are quite good.

Keith: Really? Must disagree there. I thought they were difficult to score and hard to control.

Mark: I think set-pieces are bad in all football games. They still haven't got that right.



ACTUA SOCCER 3

The final instalment from the now defunct Gremlin, this was arguably the best version yet, but again suffered at retail due to irresistible competition from the all-encompassing FIFA. The original was a revolutionary title, and the series was not without its fans, but it is unlikely we'll see the likes of it again.

Score	89% PCZ #74
Developer	Gremlin
Publisher	Gremlin
Price	N/A



Another long shot in Actua Soccer 3.



Widescreen replays and everything.



"Liverpool FC as hard as hell, United, Tottenham, Ar-se-nal..."

Dave: It's not football, none of these games are football.
Steve: I think *Actua Soccer* is more like ice hockey. You can pirouette your way up the field.
Mark: It's way too fast.
Martin: It's just a joke.
Richie: There's no decent midfield play at all.
Martin: There's no control to it. You go round in circles until someone comes near you, they fall flat on their arse and you keep running towards the goal.
Steve: The tackling is either a massive slide or nothing.
Martin: The tackling's terrible.
Mark: It's a massive slide that starts at one end of the pitch and goes straight to the other end.
Martin: (Showing astute maths) Does anyone remember a game called *Italia 90*, about ten years ago? It was just so crap. The ball stuck to your feet and you ran round everyone hoping to shoot.
Richie: It was like *Match Day*.
Mark: *Match Day 2*, that was the best game ever.
Dave: I still think the best football game was the one with the trackball. You'd have loads of grown men giving it some wrist action. (Demonstrates in disconcerting fashion).
Mark: Oh please stop!
Richie: No, that was actually quite good.
Dave: Absolutely superb.
Steve: But *Actua Soccer*. Anything good about that?
Dave: I really like it, I'd play it. I mean, it's like any of these games, once you get into them

and you're used to it, you can do all the moves. And each game's got something going for it, it's just if you can be arsed to actually learn how to play it. It usually takes about two weeks.
Steve: In *Actua Soccer's* favour, there aren't many goals. All the games we played were 1-0.
Dave: It depends. Once you start playing it, you often get 4-2s. It's knowing how to score. There's no set way, but if you come in from the corners of the area swerving in or out, they'll all pretty much go in.
Richie: It's all about crossing the ball though, isn't it? That's how you score in *Actua Soccer*. You cross the ball, wrong-foot the goalie and it's in.
Mark: That's boring English football though, isn't it?
Keith: Doesn't *Actua 3* have really good online options? You can play leagues and cups, it's really good in that department.
Steve: It's a Wireplay thing, isn't it? Do you remember that tournament where Michael Bridges lost the final to Gus SOMEBODY.
Dave: I was in that tournament and I wuz robbed. I was hammering everyone 6-0 and then some twat beat me on a lucky golden goal.
Steve: I lost to Ed Lomas, who'd never played it before.
Keith: The online support for it is excellent. You can always get a game against anybody anywhere in the world. But I don't think there's anything that

stands out about it. I thought the set pieces were a bit naff. I think it's quite a disjointed game, it doesn't seem to have the smoothness of some of the others we've mentioned.
Steve: It's certainly smooth.
Keith: I'm not talking about the animation, I mean the actual flow of the football.
Mark: It's at least one generation, even two generations behind all the other games.
Steve: It was always up against *FIFA*, and just got murdered.
Mark: *FIFA* is now *Euro 2000*, and this was about '98 wasn't it?
Dave: The ball didn't necessarily



MARTIN KORDA
LIVERPOOL

always go to your player, but if you knew where the players were because of your formation they would pick the ball up. But it wasn't like the sort of games where you can just pass and it'll go straight to the nearest player.
Keith: Does the radar help in *Actua*? I can't remember.
Steve: I don't think the radar works in any game.

Mark: You can't actually look at the radar while you're playing the game.
Keith: But you can on some games. On *Sensi* I used to look at the radar more than the pitch sometimes. I based my entire game on that.
Steve: I thought *Actua Soccer 3* on the PlayStation was OK, but I didn't have any other games at the time.
Richie: Happy days.
Dave: As it's free, it has to be a very strong contender.
Steve: Free, it's worth every penny.
Richie: Or you can download *Viva*

celebrations look like monkeys scratching their armpits.
Martin: Unless you switch the referee to 'blind', every single tackle is a foul.
Mark: Even on 'blind' he was giving away penalties.
Martin: I played Richie and I had five penalties in one game. All I did was just run in there and get tackled, and that was it, a penalty every time.
Richie: I had three players sent off.
Steve: You're looking at five-a-side by the end of it.
Mark: The tackling system is just pathetic and very random.
Richie: The Americans will love it.
Dave: The slide tackle is always too hard, and the other one, the foot-in tackle, the player just sort of shunts.
Martin: Every time you tackle someone the crowd goes 'uuueerrr'. You're waiting for the crowd to just start shouting every time you tackle someone.
Mark: It does get good if you can string a few moves together.
Richie: Weren't we playing on arcade mode?
Dave: No, we changed it.
Steve: There is no difference. As far as the actual playing model is concerned, it's identical.
Mark: One of the things about these games is when you've not got the ball you're trusting the AI to control your side. Whenever the ball goes anywhere, none of your players are there. You can see the ball because the camera's following it, but you've no idea where your players are.

"There's no control to it. You go round in circles"

MARTIN STRUGGLES TO GET TO GRIPS WITH THE FINER POINTS OF ACTUA SOCCER 3

Football from Freeloader.com.

Steve: You can, but we didn't even include that because it was that bad. Next.

UEFA CHAMPIONS LEAGUE: SEASON 1999/2000

Steve: That's the most recent game here, which you wouldn't necessarily know by looking at it.
Martin: The ball's like a balloon.
Mark: Like a lead balloon. It feels so heavy.
Keith: It's way too big. It looks like a beach ball.
Dave: (Consulting notes) Goal

Martin: Also, when you're running from midfield, there's just these huge acres of space.

Steve: You always break from the halfway line and you've just got the whole field. As I said in the review, the marking is about as tight as a wizard's sleeve. Which is an analogy for something else.

Everyone: (Laughs maniacally)

Steve: There is no marking. Forwards can stroll about with the freedom of the pitch.

Martin: As for corners, it's usually one striker versus the goalkeeper.

Steve: That's it. In the last minute you could be losing, you'll have a free kick and you might have one forward who'll go and stand on the 'D' on the edge of the area.

Mark: It's because the players themselves can't be arsed playing. But I thought it looked pretty good.

Keith: The stadiums look fantastic.

Mark: But once you start playing it, it's just so unresponsive.

Steve: I've got blisters on my fingers and thumb because you're almost trying to force it to move, it's that slow.

Dave: The commentary is the worst. There was one time he said 'That was a tremendous shot!' and the other person said straight away 'That was a dreadful shot!'

Everyone: (Laughs)

Steve: And it's so far behind as well. You can be taking the kick off and hear 'He's scored!', then get Keegan going on. You've equalised by the time they've got over the first goal.

Mark: There was one bit where he said 'What do you think of that Kevin?' and it was Ron Atkinson.

Steve: No it's Keegan, because he goes 'He's just clattered him there. He's clattered him'

Everyone: (Laughs)

Keith: He sounds like he's on helium sometimes.

Steve: Yeah, Keegan sounds in some kind of distress.

Richie: It must be Alistair McGowan or something.

Steve: I think it is genuinely him.

Dave: I got a penalty and he said, 'Aim for the corners, that's what they told me.'

Everyone: (Laughs)

Mark: That must be a genuine quote. Can you not remember, last year's World Cup? Whenever he did any commentary, it was just so laughable, it was amazing.

Dave: Keegan also did the immortal line, 'He took him

from behind and the referee didn't like that.'

Everyone: (Laughs)

Steve: And you've got Bob Wilson introducing it.

Mark: It's a PlayStation game as well isn't it? This is one thing that really pisses me off, when they don't have mouse support for the interface and you have to click everything with the pad.

Steve: The whole team management's a nightmare. You can't change two players. You can make a substitution, but you can't switch them. So if you change to 4-3-3, you end up playing a forward at left back or something, and you can't do anything about it unless you take him off. There's an auto-manage so you just end up using that.

Martin: Another annoying feature is when you get a throw-in or a free kick or a corner, you see them ambling towards the ball. The only way to get past that is to press the button, and seeing it fade out and fade into the next bit takes for ever. It detracts from the excitement of the whole thing.

Steve: The other thing that annoys me is when you get a red card, it just comes up 'Red Card' then you see the ref walk over and reach for his

Dave: There was one good thing about this game, and that was the offside replays.

Steve: You dull man.

Dave: All my offside decisions were contentious, and you can actually see them, it shows you down the line.

Steve: So you felt validated.

Mark: The thing is you pass the ball forwards sometimes and you can't see who's there. Usually



KEITH PULLIN
PORTSMOUTH

there is no defence so you've got a striker on his own so it's got to be offside, but you have no way of knowing that until it's actually happened.

Keith: It's quite easy to score.

“The stadiums look fantastic”

KEITH FINDS SOMETHING POSITIVE ABOUT UEFA CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

Martin: Not even he was this bad.

Steve: It is easy to score, as you say. A through ball always gets to your man in the box, you just twat it and it almost always goes in.

Keith: Or you shoot – bang, top corner.

Richie: I thought in a single-player game the AI was quite good.

Steve: Really? I found that every single-player game was, like, 7-6. There was shedloads of goals.

(Pizzas arrive, followed by much uncivilised troughing.)

Martin: Very good pizza. Better than any of the games.

Dave: This is about the same price as one of the games. I'd rather go for two Edges and some garlic bread and a free copy of *Actua 3*.

Steve: Does anyone think the *Champions League* licence makes it worth buying?

Keith: You don't sit there playing the game going, 'Oh, this is just like the Champions League!'

Richie: The FMV is abysmal.

Steve: So no one cares that it is actually the official game of the Champions League and you get the warbling music? The music got me into it, but then I realised it was just another

shit game. The illusion was shattered within seconds.

Richie: Not unless you're Chris Anderson, and you're a Chelsea fan...

Steve: Even then they got it wrong. I qualified for Group Two and Chelsea and Arsenal were in the same group. That's not supposed to happen, is it?

Dave: No.

Steve: So they can't even get that right.



UEFA CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

A game that started its relatively short life as *World League Soccer*, it has undergone a number of guises, including an unsuccessful Michael Owen endorsement. This is its second run-out as the official Champions League game, and it appears to be going backwards, as this is worse than last year's instalment.

Score	58% PCZ #90
Developer	Silicon Dreams
Publisher	Eidos
Price	£34.99



Painful memories for all Chelsea fans. Weep, Chris Anderson.



The players are at least different sizes in *UEFA Champions League*.



Goals aren't exactly hard to come by.



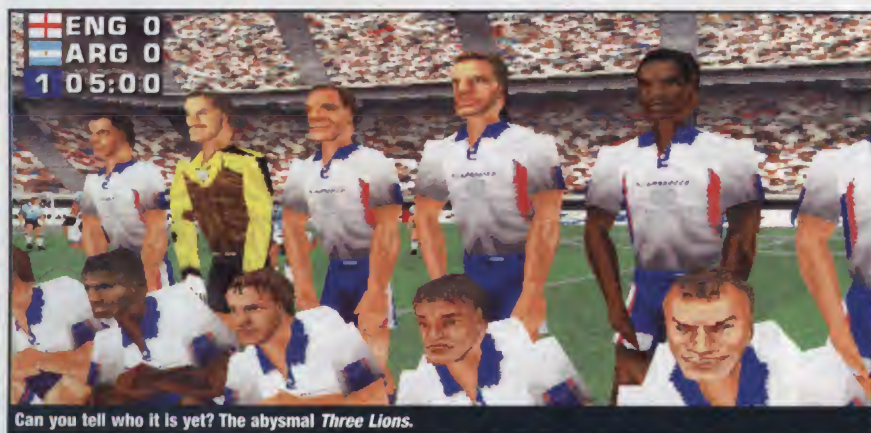
HALL OF FAME

The mere mention of *Sensi* is enough to have grown men misty-eyed in remembrance of more innocent days. Nostalgia isn't just a thing of the past though, and if you can get it to run at an acceptable speed, this is still an eminently playable game. Avoid the '98 version, though.



HALL OF SHAME

A feeble attempt to cash-in on the 1998 World Cup, the official England game was developed in San Francisco by no-hoper, Z-Axis. Widely regarded to be one of the worst football games to sully any system, disgruntled punters returned it in their droves.



MID-TABLE OBSCURITY

There's a constant trickle of football games into the PC ZONE office, a sizeable number of which are met with a disinterested shrug. One such game was *Viva Football*, which arrived with bold claims of being a simulation of real football. It was largely unplayable, and allied to a witless PR campaign, it disappeared without a trace. A similar fate befell *SuperMatch Soccer* a couple of years earlier, designed by none other than *Match Day* veteran John Ritman. A disjointed affair, it failed to trouble the charts. Add to this list the likes of *Puma Street Soccer*—original but dull—and the unreleased *Kick Off '98*, and you realise what a largely thankless task we have.



FIFA 2000

Steve: This is the 110th instalment in two years.

Keith: I've never liked *FIFA*, I never will like *FIFA*. I'm sorry, but I can't stand the control method. I can't see any improvements, it's just too complicated. Maybe it's because I'm a simpleton, but I just find that there are too many annoying things, it takes ages to get into and it's too much hard work. It's not fun, you know, it's just hard work.

Steve: It is fun. Me and him (points to Mark) were laughing like children as his seventh goal went in.

Mark: I don't think it's fun against the computer. I've always found that the normal setting is far too easy and you can win 7-0 every time. And the next level up, they take the ball off you every single time. You can win, you can beat it, but it's just too much hard work and you don't enjoy it. You're in midfield, they get the ball, you get the ball, they get the ball, you get the ball...

Dave: Sounds like playing you. I didn't enjoy that either.

Steve: It's far too busy in midfield, isn't it? You're just losing possession, you never get a chance to put your foot on the ball and have a look. Once you get the ball you know you've just got to run for the corners and get a cross over.

Keith: Throw in a few tricks.

Mark: I disagree about the controls, I think it's really good once you get used to it.

Dave: This is it, you have to get used to it.

Steve: Keith, you were pathetic at that control system.

Keith: Well, there are people like me out there, you know.

Mark: The thing is, you can't fault them for being too complicated because they're just trying to let you do more things that you can do in real football.

Steve: How many times do you see someone do a pirouette and flick it over his head as a matter of course?

Mark: But that's the kind of things you want to do, though.

Steve: Not every time.

Mark: No, I do agree it's a bit stupid, that. You can get the goalkeeper to tap it over his shoulder, up midfield and score a goal.

Steve: The main technique is just to pirouette down the wing and put a cross in.

Keith: The reason they've done that is because they want to make it into an exciting arcade game, but it's just not a

fast-flowing arcade game. It's just stop, start, little pirouettes and turns. I don't know what else to say, it makes me feel sick.

Steve: Goal scoring is taken out of your hands pretty much, isn't it? You just run up and have a pop and if it goes in you think you've done it, and if it misses it's 'f***ing computer!'

Martin: (Mysteriously) I think we all agreed there was that problem with corners.

Steve: I like the thing they brought in where you press X,Y or A.

Mark: There's too many set pieces that are just a certain goal.

Martin: When we were playing it the other day, Chris had three corners and identical things happened with all three corners.

Mark: Every time he had a corner it was a goal. It was against me. He had three corners, three goals. I think what it was is the system that my team had and the system that Chelsea had, just meant that that happened.

Steve: So it wouldn't happen with every team.

Mark: It was still annoying.

Martin: The commentary is quite good as well.

Steve: The commentary is absolutely spot-on.

Dave: The commentary's absolutely brilliant. All the presentation and atmosphere...

Steve: All EA Sports games are, pretty much.

Dave: I've never really played many *FIFA* games because I was always an *Actua Soccer* man, but I really enjoyed *FIFA 2000*.

Keith: The presentation is just unreal. It's just Sky Sports.

Steve: Yeah, exactly, we've said this before. It is purely Sky Television.

Mark: You can spend ages just going through a replay from all different angles, with that stop-motion camera.

Richie: I always liked *Actua Soccer*'s replays, where they traced the ball across as it arced in. (Nods and grunts of approval all round.)

Steve: What happens on *FIFA*? Do they just show it from all angles?

Mark: It's quite good that when you actually score a goal. It shows it from angles you wouldn't be able to select yourself.

Richie: The animation of the goal celebrations is absolutely brilliant. I remember when *Road To The World Cup* came out, it just looked like guys running around that had shat their pants, but now they've sorted it out and it looks really good. The animation is superb, the way someone scores and they



FIFA 2000

With more than half a decade of heritage, it is to be expected that the developers have got it right by now, and this is generally considered to be the case. *Road To World Cup* was the breakthrough title, and incremental changes have been made to that engine ever since. You keep buying 'em, they'll keep making 'em.

Score	88% PCZ #84
Developer	EA Sports
Publisher	EA Sports
Price	£29.99

show the replay and as he scores he just turns away and his arm goes up. It's really atmospheric.

Steve: There's quite a variety of goals aren't there? Or not? A lot of them are twatted into the top corner. There's a fair share of headers as well, unlike *Actua Soccer*.

Mark: There are a lot of spectacular goals.

Steve: But there's also a lot where

they're just bundled in, where you're stabbing round the six-yard area, goal-line scrambles. You can't beat goal-line scrambles where you're going to give away a penalty or it's going to trickle in.

Martin: It's nice to know that you can score from any angle, but you can't *always* score from every angle.

Mark: I think it's the best game for actually feeling in control of your players. You always feel you're in control of what's happening.

Steve: Yeah, because you pull away and you're twatting that speed button, you get yourself some space and cross in and you time the header. You've done it.

Dave: The power burst is really good, and the tackling.



DAVE WOODS
COVENTRY

“You've got to be stupid to keep buying it”

DAVE DESPAIRS AT THE CONSTANT SUCCESS OF MARGINALLY DIFFERENT VERSIONS OF FIFA

they keep adding to and it's a constantly evolving thing. Every so often they reach a point and they think, right, we can release a new version of the game now. And as soon as they've released that version, you just know they're back working on another version and in six months time you'll have to shell out another 35 quid.

Mark: It's just so cynical the way they release the game every six months.

Steve: I wouldn't buy it on principle.

Dave: Yeah, you've got to be stupid to keep buying it.

Keith: But hundreds of thousands of people are.

Steve: Anyone who buys all the games has too much money anyway. Shouldn't they just download a patch for every new tournament, wouldn't that be fairer?

Keith: What you should do is buy your *FIFA* licence, which means you will get the updates sent to you either by post or by email.

Dave: Even if you just paid a fiver for an Internet download for each tournament.

Steve: That would be a reasonable business model, but obviously not as good as the one they've got where everyone pays £40 every six months.

Steve: Faces will be the next generation, if they had any decency they'd put them in there. If *ISS* ever comes to the PC we can all go home. ☹

Steve: One of the most important things in any football game is the tackling.

Mark: It is the only game I found I could defend in.

Steve: You can just knock the ball about your back four if you want, just play Liverpool '80s style, just frustrate.

Martin: It's good to be able to see the likelihood of making passes as well.

Richie: Yeah, other games rely on radar.

Steve: How far can the series go? Has it evolved as far as it can and will it just change depending on what tournaments come around?

Richie: Every six months there'll be a *FIFA* in some form or another.

Keith: And it consistently goes to the top of the charts.

Mark: It's going to have to reach a point where it's going to have to transform itself completely. *FIFA 95* was isometric football.

Steve: Exactly, look at *96* and *97*, they were shocking. They only really got it right with *Road To World Cup*.

Mark: They're just making small changes that are making it better each time.

Keith: What happens is they're sat there in their studio and they've got this one engine that



FIFA 2000, with a British club again floundering in the face of Spanish competition.

AND THE WINNER IS...

No surprises here

It's taken umpteen editions and hundreds of pounds of punters' hard-earned money, but the general consensus of opinion is that *FIFA 2000* rules the roost. Of course, for *FIFA*, you can just as easily read *Euro 2000* (see review on page 75) as from what we've seen at the time of writing, it's the same game.

The decision was unanimous and rapidly reached, with even dissenting voice Keith admitting, "Fair enough, I can't play it, that's my problem, but everything about it is quality. I am at the same time upset that they keep churning it out." Indeed they do, and what we

would like to see in the next version is real player faces, a feature that is commonplace in EA Sports' basketball and ice hockey games, and something they should spend some of their vast profits implementing.

FIFA is an undeniably fine game, but it only really wins by default, highlighting the dearth of genuinely great arcade football games on the PC. Not since *SWOS* has there been a true classic, and even that was an Amiga game. As Steve concluded: "If *ISS* ever comes to the PC then we can all go home." Which we did.

OVERALL WINNER



FIFA 2000: they think it's all over. It is now.

N E W

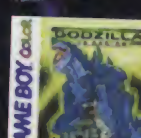
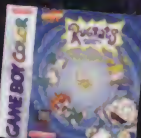
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Here are some of the games on-line

SEGA RALLY 2	INCOMING	BALDURS GATE	MARVEL VS CAPCOM
KINGPIN	BATTLEZONE	HALF LIFE	SONIC ADVENTURE
COOL BOARDERS	HERETIC 1+2	DARK FORCES	HEAVY GEAR
REVOLT	GOLDEN EYE	STARCRRAFT	GTA
Toca 2	TOMB RAIDER 1,2,3	QUAKE 2	F1 WORLD GP
GTA 1969	FIFA 2000	MORTAL KOMBAT	FINAL FANTASY VII
MECHWARRIOR	NFL 2000	GUNGAGE	POKEMON CARD
JAMES BOND 007	URBAN CHAOS	LEGO RACERS	ALUNDRA 2
SHADOW TOWER	LOVE & DESTROY	FINAL FANTASY 8	DARK FORCES
FIFA RTWC	CARMEGEDDON 2	C+C TIBERIAN SUN	BRAVEHEART
AOE 2	ENEMY LINES	DIDDYKONG RACING	THE SIM SERIES
STREETFIGHTER SERIES	GTA LONDON	GOLDENEYE	BLOOD 2 THE CHOSEN
VIRTUA FIGHTER 3TB	CROC	TEKKEN SERIES	NFS SERIES
RESIDENT EVIL 1,2	READY 2 RUMBLE	HOMEWORLD	OUTCAST
BROODWARS	HIDDEN & DANGEROUS	KINGPIN	COLIN MCRAE RALLY
AEROWINGS	ARMADA	GIGA WING	GET BASS
EXPENDABLE	WORMS ARMEGEDDON	SOUL CALIBUR	SPEED DEVILS
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SOUTH PARK	G-FORCE	G-POLICE	GENE WARS
KKND	NOVASTORM	NHL 97	NHL 98
NHL 99	NUCLEAR STRIKE	POPULOUS	POPULOUS TB
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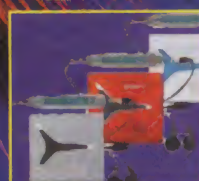
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BUDGET ZONE

This month we backpack our way into ancient civilisations and fantasy kingdoms, surviving on a minimal budget

★ **TICKET TO RIDE** Mark Hill

ANCIENT WORLDS BOX SET

★ £34.99 • Sierra • Out now

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P133 Memory 16Mb RAM **WE SAY** More for higher res and less chugging



Two whole civilisations inside one compact, rectangular box, each one a marvel of architecture, culture, art and mythology, each one the inspiration for some of the most addictive games ever created: *Caesar III* and *Pharaoh*. If god games are your thing, you won't find anything more divine than these two titles. The excitement of seeing new buildings constructed, trade routes bringing riches to your populace and the sheer wonder of the city buzzing with majestic, slave-driven life will keep you joined to your PC in a symbiotic relationship that will last 24 hours a day.

While *Pharaoh* is slightly more advanced and corrects many of the annoying gameplay hitches found in

Caesar III, building up a city full of coliseums, libraries and theatres is more engrossing than playing with sand and waiting years to build a pyramid. It also becomes too taxing to have all the gameplay hinging on the tide of the river Nile. Realistic, but not necessarily entertaining. It also fails to explore the darker side of Egyptian life (and no, we don't mean *The Mummy*). By contrast, *Caesar III* represents the pinnacle of god simulations, despite the mentioned hitches (such as spending too much time putting out fires and watching your building crumble). If you haven't got either title, you should consider this box set a must buy.

PCZVERDICT

84%



Be prepared for some hard labour, the pyramids weren't built in a day you know.

HEROES OF MIGHT & MAGIC TRILOGY

★ £24.99 • Sierra • Out now

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P133 Memory 32Mb RAM
WE SAY P166 for the third instalment

Anyone who read our recent turn-based strategy Supertest will know the love-it-or-hate-it relationship most people have with the *Heroes Of Might & Magic* series.

A bit too colourful and teenagey for some, the graphics are done in a very light fantasy style, with bright yellow griffins and bright green ogres – we won't even start on the fairies. If you can live with this, you'll find the simple, but delicately balanced gameplay more than makes up for it. The basic premise has you exploring a map to find resources for your kingdom, bands of creatures for your army and special magical items for your heroes. The battles are straightforward (but oddly addictive) and the resource management side of things adds another dimension to the game, despite its relative simplicity.

The third game is obviously the best one, being as it is a natural progression from the other two. The basic gameplay is still the same, however, so it's hard to imagine why you'd want to play the first two. Unless you are a devoted fan who wants the complete collection, you'd be better off getting *Heroes III* on its own, available now with all the add-ons.

PCZVERDICT

74%



Heroic scenes of might and magic.

DUNE 2000

★ £14.99 • EA Classics • Out now

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P90 Memory 16Mb RAM **WE SAY** Yet another P133 at least is recommended

Dune 2 started the whole real-time strategy genre as we know it today, but this sequel (or rather remake) looked dull and dated as soon as it came out. The old build a base, cultivate spices, attack enemy base gameplay is still in there, as are the plain and unpolished graphics. The simplicity of the gameplay and the basic nature of the units will appeal to newcomers to the genre. But let's face it, it's not as if *Tiberian Sun* is a complicated game. This is one recommended strictly for those suffering from acute nostalgia; otherwise find yourself a copy of the original *Total Annihilation* for the best strategic budget buy.

PCZ VERDICT

45%



The space-age strategy game that spices up your life.



P-p-p pick up a pointless penguin.

MUTANT PENGUINS

★ £4.99 • Sold Out • Out now

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor 486 DX2 66 Memory 8Mb RAM **WE SAY** Surely you've got more than a 486, haven't you?

Forget for a moment the weirdly convoluted story – aliens disguised as penguins intent on taking over the world – this is the kind of manic arcade game you wouldn't want on your GameBoy. The object of the game is confusing, not to mention pointless, and has something to do with chasing furry things around the screen to drop them in boxes in order to get a stick you can beat the penguins to death with. Mutant penguins or not, you wouldn't want your kids' minds warped by this. You'll be relieved to hear there's no seal-clubbing sequel.

PCZ VERDICT

26%



Mass Destruction: having a blast.

MASS DESTRUCTION

★ £4.99 • Sold Out • Out now

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P90 Memory 8Mb RAM **WE SAY** Fine

Don't get excited by the fact that *Mass Destruction* comes on two CDs, the first one only contains the manual. The waste of space becomes even more apparent when you see what a simple game it is. It's also a hell of a lot of fun. Think of the classic *Commando*, but with *Cannon Fodder*'s sprightly graphics and tanks instead of soldiers and you won't be too far off. It's a pure mindless arcade game – in the style of *Desert Strike* – that won't hold your attention for too long. But while it does, you can forget the primitive graphics and have a good old blast.

PCZ VERDICT

58%



Get behind the wheel for the perfect racing experience.

SCREAMER RALLY

★ £4.99 • Sold Out • Out now

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P100 Memory 16Mb RAM Supports 3D cards **WE SAY** 32Mb RAM to run under Windows and a 3D card for tastier looks



Any driving game with the word 'Screamer' in its title guarantees quality, and this is definitely the best one in the series. Slightly aged graphically (no surprises there), but the sheer speed and manoeuvrability of the cars more than make up for it. We have always contended that the best racing games are those that *feel* right, and *Screamer Rally* feels perfect. Presented with the usual high quality Sold Out standard, this is a bargain well worth investigating.

PCZ VERDICT

83%



Life in plastic – not fantastic.

ARMY MEN

★ £4.99 • Sold Out • Out now

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P90 Memory 16Mb RAM **WE SAY** A P133 is better

We know someone out there likes these plastic army men games because 3DO keep churning them out, but it's certainly not us. Coming out on the back of the success of *Toy Story 2* (a fantastic film with poor gaming spin-offs), *Army Men* is a 2D shoot 'em up that was a major disappointment when it appeared two years ago. As with *Mass Destruction*, the points of reference are *Commando* and *Cannon Fodder*, but it has none of the enjoyable gameplay. This is perfectly suited to a cut-price budget range: it's cheap, it doesn't last very long and it's made of plastic.

PCZ VERDICT

38%



More shoot 'em up than strategy.

UPRISING

★ £4.99 • Sold Out • Out now

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P90 Memory 8Mb RAM **WE SAY** Again, a P133 will make things run better

An extremely ambitious title, *Uprising* combines the tactical side of a real-time strategy with the action viewed from one of the units. Sadly, it ends up looking like a poor man's *Battlezone*. It's really hard to know what's going on at any time, making the strategy side of things impossible to get into. As a result, you end up only caring about the shoot 'em up part of the game. Having said all that, this is one of those titles that is definitely well worth checking out at this price, especially if you own an ancient system.

PCZ VERDICT

61%

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FEEDBACK

The Sims is officially declared dull, the extreme violence in *Soldier Of Fortune* is officially declared fun, and *Ultima IX* is officially declared bugged. Mark Hill bites the hand that feeds

IT'S YOUR SHOUT!

Feedback is here to offer you, the player, a platform to voice your opinions on any of the games reviewed in *PC Zone* over the last three months. Whether you want to sing a game's praises or simply give it a verbal beating, we want to hear from you. Remember to keep your comments between 50 and 150 words and include your name, age and address.

WRITE TO Feedback, *PC ZONE*, Dennis Publishing, 19 Bolsover Street, London W1P 7HJ

E-MAIL Alternatively, e-mail them to us at letters.pczone@dennis.co.uk with 'Feedback' in the subject line.



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SOLDIER OF FORTUNE

REVIEWED Issue 89, May
SCORE 80%

What we thought

PCZONE AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE "It's undeniably fun to play. The levels aren't particularly taxing but they are imaginatively designed. The real-world setting adds to the thrill, as does – and we're almost ashamed to admit this – the outrageous level of violence. It probably deserves to be banned – but while it's here, let's enjoy it quietly."

What you said

★ "I'd have to agree completely with your 80 per cent score of *Soldier Of Fortune*, but I question your reasons. Aside from telling us about the laughable plot and shamefully gory gore, you forgot to mention the cool way the enemies jump out from imaginative places and how beautifully balanced the weapons are, amongst other things. The game is surprisingly realistic and the effect of enemy fire on your ability to aim is unrivalled as far as I can see. Although there is an extreme lack of 'scream' sound files and a pointless email system for your missions, the maps are excellent and the gameplay is furious. It may not be as good as *Half-Life*, but I'll be playing it for longer, online as well."

Pete Sellen, Surrey

★ "I just bought *Soldier Of Fortune* the other week after months of eager anticipation and, I have to say, I'm fairly impressed. The first time you kill someone it's just sooooo much fun to see them convulsing on the floor, rapidly losing limbs as you plug bullet after bullet into them. I soon found that this was like the swearing in *Kingpin* though; initially its fantastic but you soon stop noticing it after a while. I've found that a lot of the FPSs being released lately seem to shove all of their ideas into the first couple of levels, and then just make the rest of the game as basic as they can with no other interesting bits,

but I thought that *SOF* did OK in maintaining a constant standard. I've had a few games on multiplayer and I was a bit disappointed with the size of the maps. Granted there are a fair few, but I thought they were just too small to have a good run around in."

Chris Thomas

★ "I have been reading your mag for years now and it is the best on the market. But I felt as though I had to complain about your recent review of *Soldier Of Fortune*. To give this excellent game a score of 80 per cent is ludicrous. I have been playing first-person-shooters from the days of *Wolfenstein* and have played them all and, apart from *Doom* and *Half-Life*, no other game has had me so engrossed or provided such a great atmosphere. The missions are well thought out and challenge you to think instead of just blasting anything that moves. The graphics are glorious and the James Bond style music adds an extra dimension to the atmosphere that is NOT present in other first-person shooters.

The review seemed to dwell on how boring your character is.

What?? What the hell does that matter, it's the game I want to read about. The review seemed as though it had been knocked together at the last minute by somebody who has barely played the game. Have you tried it online? It is excellent and well supported.

SOF is the best FPS currently available, it oozes quality, and it urinates on *Quake III*."

Alex

★ "I'm not sure which aspect of this game is worse. The fact that you're not penalised for shooting Iraqi civilians, or the fact that you are penalised for shooting self-righteous, over-patriotic, twat-bastard, retarded American civilians. Having said that, the game plays all right, even if it is piss easy to complete."

Rob Fletch

Comments

The only reason we can find for your over-enthusiastic ravings is that you're a bunch of sadists. The violence is unnecessarily excessive, the missions ultra-linear and the AI practically non-existent. Nevertheless, we'll admit it's great fun to play. It has some great moments and we'd

"The first time you kill someone it's sooo much fun to see them convulsing on the floor, losing limbs as you plug bullet after bullet into them"

CHRIS THOMAS

recommend it to any FPS fan, but at the end of the day it's a fascistic Rambo arcade game.

THE SIMS

REVIEWED Issue 87, March
SCORE 86%

What we thought

PCZONE AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE "Because much of the game concerns your management of time, you sometimes find there's hardly any left to do interesting things. You spend so long doing the boring basic tasks of life that there's little time for anything else."

What you said

★ "I agree totally with the recent feedback regarding *The Sims*. It's outstanding and stands proudly alone in its own mini genre. The basic idea has never been considered in a game before and this is why it is so unique. My one and only complaint is about how quickly a Sim's energy level reduces, in some extreme cases they have to miss work and sleep all day to recover thus reducing your fun and social levels, which makes the Sim depressed. Other than this the game is great fun to play,



Soldier Of Fortune: a guaranteed cure for migraine? Or, at least homicidal tendencies.

**COMPO
WINNER!**

READER REVIEW OF THE MONTH

Here is the first of our
Reader Review Competition
winners. Think you can do
better? Then start putting pen to paper

A grenade explodes against the stark white background of Russian ice fields. Two anonymous snow-suited men disintegrate, screaming. Somewhere to your left comes the harsh bark of an automatic weapon, but you do not react. You are momentarily distracted by something sliding past you, painting a thin red streak across the hard-packed snow. It's a leg. As you die, your in-game vision swings giddily skywards.

That was one of many moments of blinding clarity that I encountered while playing *Soldier Of Fortune*, the latest FPS in the topical 'who do you want to shock today?' sub-genre. If you never really understood Marlon Brando's deadpan war-is-stupid monologue at the end of *Apocalypse Now*, SOF will take you part of the way towards enlightenment. How you interpret its message will ultimately depend on the state of your own levels of 21st century desensitisation. SOF takes yet another step along the road towards a true war sim and, in doing so, provides a rock solid argument against its own existence for those who choose to blame society's ills on the products of its leisure industry.

Under the microscope of political correctness SOF looks as though it should only appeal to sadistic gun-nuts. However, I have some bad news for you. Less than two minutes into the first level you will have killed at least three people, real people who scream and clutch their wounded limbs before collapsing in pools of their own blood. You might have saved a hostage or two if your trigger finger is steadier than mine and you will be wearing the body armour from a dying (dead if you are too slow) SWAT officer. You won't be running, this isn't *Quake III* or *Unreal Tournament*. You will be taking your time, leaning around corners and making sure you get them before they get you. You will be having fun.

John Tapper, Herefordshire

SEL

Internet newsgroups to find a fix just to get the damn thing started. When I did I couldn't believe the poor performance on my monster PC. And don't even get me started on the bugs – crashing back to the desktop, getting stuck on scenery – they're all in there.

I made the trip back to PC World and complained. They tried to fob me off by smugly saying that they could only accept a return if they couldn't get the game to work on one of their machines – I'm sure they thought I was kidding them and that they would get it working fine. You should have seen their faces when they couldn't!"

Sel

Comment
The *Ascension* score wasn't affected by the bugs, I simply felt the game was too linear to capture the attention of all but

the most forgiving of gamers. Andy, you were lucky not to have experienced bug problems with the game. As you can see from the letter below yours many people were not so lucky. And, as you correctly point out, *Hidden & Dangerous* was bugged but got a very high score. The same would have applied to *Ascension* if it had been the epic end to the series we were all expecting, instead of what was a trite adventure game. And for the record, yes, I reviewed the UK version of the game, unlike every other PC games mag in the UK, some of whom made no mention of the bugs whatsoever, so I was more than fair to the game and gave it every chance, but at the end of the day it just didn't produce the goods.

Chris Anderson

plus downloads from the Internet will extend the already endless possibilities in the game."

Richard Ingram

★ "The Sims has to be the most anal game ever. It's a crap polygonal *American Beauty* without the storyline or breasts – what can we expect to top the charts next, *Virtual Creosote Fence Painting*?"

Broowster

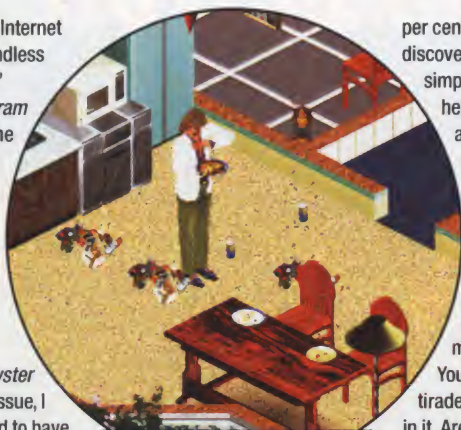
★ "Reading your latest issue, I noticed that you appeared to have only received positive feedback on *The Sims*, which seems very odd to me. I bought the game a few weeks ago, anticipating something special, and took it back within days. My reason? Sheer boredom. The game is tedious beyond belief. Do I really want to make people talk to each other 50 or so times, just so they begin to like each other? Perhaps creating new genres should be secondary to providing some gameplay, or am I alone in thinking this? Regardless of this technicality, no other game has bored me so quickly or so intensely."

Dave Terry

★ "After reading many reviews and hearing good things from friends I decided to get *The Sims* for my birthday. On my birthday, full of anticipation I ripped open the box and installed the game. Upon playing the game, however, I discovered that it was incredibly dull and repetitive. Their AI is also not very good and they have extremely bad bladder control. I would like you to note that this complaint comes from someone who normally enjoys games of this genre and is not a solid *Quake*-head or anything."

Matthew Barlow

Comment
We're a little surprised at all the criticisms *The Sims* has received this month. Granted, it isn't perfect (or 100 per cent original, many of you can still remember *Little Computer People* on the Spectrum), and it can get rather tedious after a



The Sims: A bit too much like real life, ie hard work.

while, but it's still a great title. Clearly, patience isn't one of your greatest virtues.

**ULTIMA IX
REVIEWED** Issue 89, May
SCORE 52%

What we thought

"Less like the epic finale we all hoped for and more like a cynical cash-in at the expense of the vast legion of *Ultima* fans."

What you said

★ "Ultima Ascension is not an RPG by any stretch of the imagination. It is what is known in the industry as an action adventure'. Depending on how you look at it, this may not necessarily be a bad thing, but it certainly wasn't what *Ultima* fans were expecting from a game of this importance."

"I got the Dragon Edition of *Ultima IX* from the US before Christmas and, although the game engine itself is superb, with a decent PC and graphics card (read

Pentium II 500+ with a 32-bit AGP card), some true *Ultima* fans may feel let down by the storyline – there are a few inconsistencies with the previous games in the series. Having said that, any return players will find that Britannia is like an old slipper – it's a very comfortable game world."

Andrew McMullan

★ "I bought *Ultima Ascension* on the day of release and had nearly completed it by the time I read your review. I was shocked to see that you'd given it 52

per cent. Upon further reading, I discovered that it was, quite simply, not a fair review. I can't help but think it was in an attempt to be somehow cool by going against the grain and giving an undeniably epic and involving game a low score, simply because it'd been released late and you'd been saying for months not to buy it.

You embark on a massive tirade about how many bugs are in it. Are you sure you played the UK code? I'm now about 90 per cent through it, and so far I have discovered only one major bug. Yet *Sin* and *Hidden & Dangerous*, the two most criminally bugged games I've ever played, score 80 per cent and 91 per cent respectively. *Ultima Ascension* (UK) has no more bugs than any other major title released in these troubled times.

You complain about the linear storyline. I will simply say that at no point in the game was I more aware of being forced along a

“Ultima IX sucks. I had to trawl Net newsgroups to find a fix to get the damn thing going. And don't get me started on the bugs”

particular path than in, say, *Half-Life*, undeniably the best game ever. Then, of course, *Final Fantasy VII* and *VIII*: so linear you don't actually play, you just watch and press a button every now and then. 84 per cent and 83 per cent in your scores.

You say it's uninvolved, but *Ultima Ascension* gripped me like no game since *Half-Life* and, before that, *Doom*, *Ultima VIII* and *Ultima VII*. I only recognise *Half-Life* as being a better, currently available, single-player game. While there is of course room for a different opinion, I just don't think your review was fair. It's as simple as that."

Andy Patrick

★ "Why didn't I listen? You advised readers not to touch *Ultima IX* with a barge pole until you'd reviewed it. But when I saw it on the shelf in PC World, I just couldn't help myself and like a fool I parted with my money. This game sucks. I had to trawl



Ultima IX: just buggin' you

THEY'VE ALL ENLISTED...

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WORD, DAZZLING."

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PANTS PEOPLE



Mr A Garrard lets his feelings on the usefulness of pants be heard.



Phil Hirst spent all night thinking of this funny and original suggestion.



Simon Mooney's suggestion. Printable, but not very useable – or witty.



The Dead Badger Award. Preferable to the Colostomy Bag Award. Just.



Cack poo poo. Pile of Poo. Or plain old Lav. Oh how we laughed.

As the great 'Pants' debate gathers more and more momentum, **Steve Hill** takes the plunge and delves nervously into the mailbox

Conventional wisdom dictates that *PC ZONE* readers are a fairly intelligent, well-informed lot. Clearly we've misjudged you, as a seemingly innocuous suggestion in the letters pages has opened up a hornet's nest of inanity, with many readers unleashing streams of consciousness from the darkest recesses of their game-frazzled minds. It all started when Mr A Garrard was bestowed with the honour of May's Letter of the Month for his mildly amusing proposal that the *PC ZONE* Pants award for sub-20 per cent games be dropped. The reason given was that he actually liked pants, and that they served a useful purpose in society. In his infinite wisdom, Chris Anderson invited readers to come up with a suggestion to replace 'Pants', with the simple remit that they be "insulting and totally hilarious".

There would appear to have been a mix-up, as the barrage of ideas submitted ranged from the subnormal to the ludicrous. It's hard to know where to start, but among the more printable suggestions was Richard Hall's 'Die Before You Try!' which he proudly proclaimed as both "witty and original." We'll be the judges of that, Richard, although suffice to say it has as much chance of being used as Stephen Houston's 'PC ZONE Muppet Of The Month', Andy Challinor's 'Dead Badger Award', Matthew Dalton's 'Ginger Pube Award', or Simon Mooney's 'Coasters', replete with rudimentary illustration.

Philip Black of Preston was actually in favour of retaining the 'Pants Award'. He cited it as "a classic example of universally accepted and understood slang, seemingly appearing from nowhere and being somewhat obscure in its application, it's surely the most efficient way of expressing one's dislike of a product or service." He did however see fit to offer three alternatives, in the shape of 'Arse', 'Bag O' Shite', and 'Jar Jar Binks'. Thanks, but no thanks.

Short and sweet, Steven Croxon offered the 'PC ZONE Tits Up Award', and Julian Smith from Sheffield continued the intellectual debate with a dual offering of 'PC ZONE Belly Aching Groan', and 'PC ZONE Cack Poo Poo'. The lavatorial theme was upheld by the extravagantly named Zachary McAdam, who suggested we "describe a game as either 'A Load of Old Lav' or just 'Lav', as in lavatory/toilet/bog/john/etc." We get the general idea, as did Cornwall's Dylan Murphy, who says: "I would like to suggest that the new *PC ZONE* award for binary trash should henceforth be known as the 'PC ZONE Pile Of Poo'. I think that a nice steaming turd should

be strategically placed on a CD to really get the message home. While the new moniker is not a million miles away from the previous label, I feel that poo is something we can all relate to." Some more than others obviously, with ex-pat Pete Indge of Denver also in favour of a 'Steaming Pile Of Poo' as well as 'Bunch Of Arse'. Where have we heard that before?

Even more graphic was Richard Cain of Cheltenham, who suggested the 'PC ZONE Colostomy Bag Award: Trust Me... You Don't Want To Open This One!' We didn't really want to open any more emails at this stage, although Ed Ryder did raise a faint smirk with his 'Turtle Head Award', "for those games that really are poking out of the rectum of the software industry."

Other than defecation, the most popular theme by far was masturbation, something that speaks volumes for the demographics of

"Ed Ryder did raise a faint smirk with his 'Turtle Head Award'. For those games that are poking out of the rectum of the software industry"

our readership. Lancashire's Phil Hirst apparently spent all night coming up with 'PC ZONE W**k!' even going as far as sending us a self-designed logo. "Do I win a prize?" he asks hopefully. No, you don't. Pete Indge again piped up with 'Pile Of W**k', pointing out that it would be "a little trickier to portray graphically, but would certainly raise the adult content of *PC ZONE* again."

The authors of further entries would clearly benefit from psychiatric help, including David Oakes, who suggested 'PC ZONE This Game Stinks Of A Rat's Genitalia Dipped In Marmite And Fed To A Very Hungry, Very Angry, Deprived Teenage Boy Called Fred Who Spends His Time Playing Games That Have No Relevance To Life, Sex, Girls, And Anything That Is Any Fun Award.' As rants go this was perhaps matched only by the 'It's As Good As Eating A Semen Sandwich On Granary Bread While Realising You Only Have A 486 And No Friends And Finding Your *PC ZONE* Subscription Has Been Mysteriously Deleted', this from the tellingly named FURY-161. Where did it all go wrong?

Forget it, the 'Pants' are here to stay, and there are no prizes for anyone. We're going to treat ourselves as a reward for having to trawl through your entries. Although, if you really want to, treat yourselves to a great big pair of rancid red Y-fronts. With biscuit coloured piping. **[K2]**

THE HISTORY OF GAMES: PART II — SPACE COMBAT

Leaving Earth far behind, *Richie Shoemaker* charts the rise of the space combat game

“In gameplay terms, *Elite* was like seeing the first television broadcast or the first talking movie”

JOHN SHIALI FROM A TALENT FOR WAR,
THE WEB'S TOP PORTAL FOR SPACE GAMES

Space has been a backdrop for games ever since the first one was created way back in 1961 in the bowels of MIT. That game, if you missed last month's instalment, was *SpaceWar*, a simple two-player game where each combatant fought against gravity and each other, much like the arcade game *Asteroids* nearly 18 years later, only without the asteroids. Since then the computer games industry has grown from a '60s experiment into a multi-billion dollar industry. Games are now bigger than films and space is still the place to be.

Strictly speaking, games such as *SpaceWar*, *Asteroids* and *Defender* are a million miles away from today's 3D-accelerated titles. In the early '80s simulation was barely possible: 3D graphics were simple at best and storylines were banal, with aliens simply tasked with laying waste to humankind. On that last point at least, nothing much has changed. But shortly after simulations started appearing and 3D graphics had gone from

jerky white lines to ones that moved at an acceptable rate, the granddaddy of space combat games appeared and its name was (cue fanfare) *Elite*.



① *Elite* for the BBC computer.

Developed by two Cambridge graduates – David Braben and Ian Bell – *Elite* immediately set a standard within the burgeoning games industry, not only for its unique gameplay, but for its revolutionary visuals. Released for the BBC computer in 1984, it was a slick combination of combat, trading and smooth wireframe graphics, all within a measly 32K – smaller than a simple text file today.

You were given a spaceship and 100 credits, and by ferrying various commodities between hundreds of planets, the aim was to upgrade your ship and finally join the 'Elite'.

One young gamer bitten by *Elite*'s addictive mixture of gameplay was John Shiali, a self-confessed space sim addict who now helps run A Talent For War, the Web's premier portal for space-based games.

"*Elite* really kicked the whole thing off," says John. "In gameplay terms it was like seeing the first television broadcast or the first talking movie. While other games were shifting 2D sprites around, *Elite* came along with its 3D free-form trading and combat. When you started playing *Elite* it sucked you in. There really was a complete universe on the other side. Just when you thought it

gameplaying experience."

Looking back, it was an amazing feat and it's no wonder that *Elite* went on to great success on other platforms, from the rubber-keyed Spectrum to the Super Nintendo and finally the PC itself. In all, *Elite* has sold more than a million copies worldwide, twice that of its 1993 sequel *Frontier: Elite II*.

"Perhaps it was the arrogance of youth," says David Braben, *Elite*'s legendary co-creator (now working on *Elite IV*). "We did expect the game to become popular at the time – it was the sort of game I wanted to play after all, and it was not unreasonable

"Perhaps it was the arrogance of youth, but we did expect *Elite* to become popular – it was the sort of game I wanted to play"

DAVID BRABEN, THE LEGENDARY CO-CREATOR OF THE GROUND-BREAKING *ELITE*

was beginning to level out, something new would appear to pique your interest again. Every aspect of gameplay was artfully balanced, and it's arguable that no free-form space sim has matched the original *Elite* for such an intense, long-lived

to assume there were others out there who wanted the same. This was why I wanted to hold on to the rights for other platforms when we first signed with Acornsoft (*Elite*'s original publisher), which proved to be a very good idea!



② *Elite* has had two sequels so far, *First Encounters* was the second.



③ *Battlecruiser 2000AD* was influenced by *Elite*.

"I still think *Elite* was the best combat/trading game because of its implementation and free-form nature," says Derek Smart, creator of *Battlecruiser 3000AD*. "*Elite* played a major role in my design decision back when I started *Battlecruiser* in the late '80s. I just took the ball and ran with it."

CREATING WORLDS

While *Elite* creators Braben and Bell squabbled and eventually fell out over its proposed sequel, in the States a young developer who had grown up in Manchester was

THE MEN WHO BOLDLY WENT...

NAME: David Braben



POSITION: Founder and lead developer
COMPANY: Frontier Developments
WEBSITE: www.frontier.co.uk
CV: Co-creator of the legendary *Elite*, David Braben started development on the ground-breaking game in 1982

while attending Cambridge University. Since then he has had a string of hits with *Zarch* on the Acorn Archimedes, *Virus* on ST/Amiga and the two *Elite* sequels – *Frontier: Elite II* (1993) and *Frontier: First Encounters* (1995). David Braben's last PC game was 1999's *Virus* remake *V2000*. Currently working on *Elite IV*, David is also involved in the Elite Club, an organisation devoted to helping third-party developers of *Elite* 'remakes'.

NAME: Larry Holland



POSITION: Founder, lead designer and president
COMPANY: Totally Games
WEBSITE: www.totallygames.com
CV: Having started out converting games like *Zaxxon* to home computers in the

early '80s, Larry Holland came to prominence in 1987 when he started work at LucasFilm Games. Three World War II games followed: *Battlehawks* (1988), *Their Finest Hour* (1989) and *Secret Weapons Of The Luftwaffe* (1991). However, it was with the *X-Wing* series that Totally Games became famous in its own right, with *X-Wing* released in 1993, *TIE Fighter* in 1994, *X-Wing Vs TIE Fighter* in 1997 and *X-Wing Alliance* last year. Larry is now working on *Star Trek: Bridge Commander*, tipped to bring *Star Trek* games up to the standard of their *Star Wars* counterparts.

NAME: Bernd Lehahn



POSITION: Lead designer/programmer
COMPANY: Egosoft
WEBSITE: www.egosoft.com
CV: Outside of its native Germany, Egosoft was relatively unknown before last year when it released

the *Elite*-style space trading/combat game *X – Beyond The Frontier*. Prior to that, Egosoft had released a string of games in its homeland, including *Fatal Heritage* for the Amiga in 1990 and *UGH* in 1992. On the PC it has developed *Flies Attack On Earth* (1993) and *Imperium Romanum* (1995), both of which we've never heard of. This year they will release *X-Tension*, a standalone expansion based in the *X Universe* and there is talk of an online version of the game to follow.

NAME: Erin Roberts



POSITION: Producer and designer
COMPANY: Digital Anvil
WEBSITE: www.digitalanvil.com
CV: Brother of Chris Roberts, Erin joined

Origin in 1988 and immediately set to work on the seminal *Wing Commander*, scripting the AI for the game. Working on all the *Wing Commander* games, Erin became the producer on the series' two most successful spin-offs: *Strike Commander* (1993) and the *Elite*-style *Privateer* in the same year. Although work was started on *Strike Commander 2*, the game never came to fruition and it was then on to *Privateer 2: The Darkening* (1996). Now with his brother at Digital Anvil, Erin has just completed *StarLancer* while Chris is working on the follow-up, *FreeLancer*.

NAME: John Shiali



POSITION: Features editor
COMPANY: A Talent For War
WEBSITE: www.atfw.net
CV: After starting a space-gaming website called Station Omega in 1998, John Shiali now runs A Talent For War

along with co-creator Beth Wasden, which for fans of space combat games is perhaps the world's best website, offering daily links to news, previews and reviews of all things related to space-based games. A self-confessed *Elite* fanatic (he bought the legendary game on the first day of release), John has been into games since the early days of the BBC computer and works in London in the IT industry. He knows his stuff.

NAME: Derek Smart



POSITION: Lead designer and founder
COMPANY: 3000AD
WEBSITE: www.3000ad.com
CV: More than ten years in development, *Battlecruiser 3000AD* (released in 1996)

was perhaps one of the most ambitious games to date and, more than most games of its genre at the time, was much more than a simple space combat sim. Unfortunately it was bugged and released unfinished and it was only by releasing the game for free in 1998 that Derek managed to put a stop to his critics. Late last year GT released the v2.7 version of the game which introduced 3D support. Next in the pipeline are *Battlecruiser Millennium* and *Tactical Engagement*, which will be followed by *Battlecruiser 3020AD* and *Galactic Command* – an online-only spin-off.

working on a game that would eventually be looked back upon with as much respect as *Elite*. That developer was Chris Roberts and his game, if you hadn't guessed already, was *Wing Commander*, which is still seen as a blueprint for the genre, with the *X-Wing*, *FreeSpace* and Robert's own *StarLancer* series all still borrowing heavily from its ideas.



➤ *Wing Commander* blazed a trail for all to follow.

"*Wing Commander* was more about telling a story within what was previously a barren genre in that respect," says Erin Roberts, brother of Chris. "As much as it

machine. Sega and Nintendo were battling it out in the console wars, Atari and Commodore were at loggerheads in the dying home computer market and behind them, like today, the PC was better suited to the office than the home.

"The real milestone *Wing Commander* made was to encourage people to think about the PC as a games machine," says John Shiali. "All of a sudden, people needed soundcards, joysticks and upgrades because they had to play this game."

"We've always tried to push technology all the way," says Erin Roberts. "When we start a game we always look three years ahead and what the technology will be like then. For instance, when *Strike Commander* first came out it didn't sell very well because not many people could play it, but within a year it was massive."

"The original *Star Wars* movies were and probably still are the basis for most of the gameplay design within the genre"

LARRY HOLLAND, FOUNDER OF TOTALLY GAMES, CREATOR OF THE *X-WING* SERIES

was an action game, with 3D combat, the epic story was just as important and that's what we've always tried to do in all our games — tell a story, whether it's through in-engine cut-scenes or through FMV. Although *Wing Commander* was very linear in nature, it really dragged people in."

"*Wing Commander* took a different view on space combat games," offers David Braben. "It was the first space combat game to have scripted adventures. The way the story was implemented, while it felt one-dimensional, was rich in content."

At the time of *Wing Commander*'s release in 1990 the PC wasn't much of a games



➤ *Wing Commander II* told a story through in-game cut-scenes.



➤ *Privateer 2* took the *Wing Commander* series into a free-form universe.

As a series of games *Wing Commander* remains one of the

world's most popular and profitable. To date, *Wing Commander* and its sequels and spin-offs have generated more than US\$110 million for publishers Electronic Arts, which along with its series of sports games has made EA one of the worlds biggest games publisher. With *Wing Commander III* and *IV*, Roberts almost single-handedly created interactive movies, bringing in big-name actors and special video effects. *Wing Commander IV* alone had a budget of US\$8 million and made money back, with interest. Suddenly games became big business and everyone wanted in on the action.



➤ One of the first interactive movies was *Wing Commander III*.



➤ The *FreeSpace* series takes over from where *Wing Commander* left off.

"In some ways the success of the *Wing Commander* series eventually stunted the growth of the genre," offers John Shiali. "I've spoken to developers who have been to publishers with innovative, original and clever space sim games, only to be told to 'make it more like *Wing Commander*'."

With new genres emerging, space combat lost ground and in

terms of innovation it was only by making use of new hardware that games pushed the boundaries further. Belatedly, *Star Wars* came to the PC and all was well with the world.

A NEW HOPE

"The original *Star Wars* movies were and probably still are the basis for most of the gameplay design within the genre," says Larry Holland of Totally Games, creator of the *X-Wing* series. "That feeling was actually based on George Lucas's love of World War II air combat movies and he incorporated that large number of small fighters into the movies. Almost all games from the simplest flight models to the most complex borrow a considerable amount of their style from what was seen in those films."



➤ *X-Wing* was the game *Star Wars* fans had been waiting for.

"*Wing Commander* was based more on *Battlestar Galactica* than it was on *Star Wars*," says Erin Roberts. "The idea was to bring to life a space scenario that was more epic, with lots of carrier-based battles. *Star Wars* wasn't a big deal with what Chris was trying to do, but it was an awesome series of films."

In essence, *X-Wing* (released in 1993), was much more of a *Wing Commander* clone than its creators would care to admit. What it did do, however, was allow space fans to fly the ships they had always wanted to since 1977: *X-Wings*, *TIE Fighters* and

eventually, in 1998 with the release of *X-Wing Alliance*, the Millennium Falcon. However, that's not to say Totally Games was content to stick with the well-worn formula of linear action-based gameplay.

"Not many people know this, but after the success of *TIE Fighter*, our next game design in the *X-Wing* Series was essentially a smuggler/trading game code-named *Falcon*," reveals Larry Holland. "*Falcon* was set in a free-form universe with graphic adventure qualities mixed in. However, we found it difficult to create a truly open-ended game and at the same time attempt to tell a compelling story in a fairly well-defined universe."

But what of *Star Trek*? After 30 years of shows and films, why has there never been a *Star Trek* game to rival that of *Star Wars*? John Shiali thinks it's all down to quality control. "With George Lucas keeping a tight reign on things, the quality of *Star Wars* games has been a lot better. With Paramount selling off *Trek* franchises left, right and centre, many of the games have been of poor quality. Also the nature of the story universes are quite different. *Trek* TV shows often have puzzle-based, non-confrontational storylines. The fact that you command a capital ship that handles like a fighter has not helped the *Trek* games in the sim genre. Hopefully *Klingon Academy* will solve these problems."



➤ Will *Klingon Academy* be the first decent *Star Trek* space game? Hopefully.

TIMELINE

Space combat games have come a long way from the vast emptiness of early efforts to the glorious pyrotechnics of the latest games. Here are some of the landmark titles that have appeared along the way

1984 *Elite* is released for the BBC home computer and soon makes its debut on other 8-bit formats.



➤ *Elite*
1990 *Wing Commander* is released and so begins a new era in space combat games.



➤ *Wing Commander*

1991 *Wing Commander II* is released
1993 *X-Wing* is released.
Frontier: Elite II is released and receives mixed reviews.
Academy is the first *Wing Commander* spin-off, followed by the freeform *Privateer*.

1994 The dark side take to the stars in *TIE Fighter*. *Wing Commander III*, with its rich FMV becomes the benchmark in 'interactive movies'. It costs and makes a fortune.



➤ *TIE Fighter*

1995 *Descent* takes the gameplay of *Doom* underground. Gametek release the long-awaited and fatally bugged *Frontier: First Encounters*.



➤ *Frontier: First Encounters*



⌚ Fly the Millennium Falcon in *X-Wing Alliance*.



⌚ *Independence War*, where capital ship combat became cool.

Having been the bastion of *Star Wars* gaming for so long, Totally Games recently announced they were working on a *Star Trek* space sim. "With *Star Trek: Bridge Commander* we actually didn't look to *Battlecruiser* or *Independence War* for influence, because the game we are creating doesn't follow the traditional style of space combat. In making a game about commanding a large capital ship we found some influences in submarine games. We're confident *Bridge Commander* will be a new direction both for the genre and *Star Trek* games."

BREAKING AWAY

With *Elite* still in a universe of its own and most other developers still going down the *Wing Commander* route, space combat as a genre has essentially split into two with new games appearing more evolutionary than revolutionary.

"We are in a business where evolution (and let's face it — just plain copying) is the norm," reveals David Braben. "It is far easier to make an incremental

change to someone else's game than to attempt to design a new one. It is pretty disappointing that these other games have moved the field forwards so little, other than adding better support for hardware render cards."

"I don't think space combat games can be that revolutionary again because I think we've done it all," says Derek Smart. "*Battlecruiser*, for instance, merges several genres (space flight, planetary flight, ground dynamics, etc) with the sequel *Battlecruiser Millennium* introducing planetary first-person control, yet it is still classed as 'space combat'. Even with all the innovation in the industry, it is still the only space combat sim, since the *Elite* series, that merges both space and planetary worlds."



⌚ Space sim meets first-person action in *Battlecruiser Millennium*.

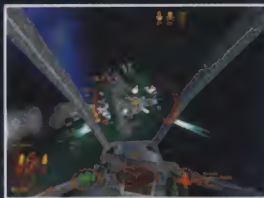


⌚ *X - Beyond The Frontier* took *Elite*'s legendary gameplay and combined it with some cutting-edge visuals.

Bernd Lehahn remains hopeful: "Of course the biggest revolution was to create the genre in the first place, and that was done a long time ago. Bringing a perfect and realistic economic simulation — multiplayer features, up-to-date

3D graphics, real characters and so on — are themselves unrevolutionary. But put them all together and maybe they are."

So what does the future hold for fans of the space combat game? We may have painted a bleak picture of the present but the truth is that with *FreeSpace 2*, *StarLancer*, *Battlecruiser* and *X - Beyond The Frontier*, we have plenty to be getting along with and it looks as if it's going to get a whole lot better.



⌚ *StarLancer* goes back to basics in Digital Anvil's new space series.

"I think that space games are coming back into fashion," says John Shiali hopefully. "Admittedly they can be as complicated as the average flight sim, and this may put people off, but they can offer a very broad gaming experience, involving tactics, reflexes, role-playing, puzzle-solving and frantic combat. A lot of the gaming market has been swamped by first-person *Quake*-style games or RTS *C&C* clones. What was left for space sims was grabbed by *Wing Commander*. In the future I expect space sims to develop into complete working universes, where you can do whatever you want. Some of which will operate continuously online just like *Everquest*. Turn bad and become a pirate, hide in asteroid belts and gas giants, fly down and walk around planets, trade, command fleets, become a bounty hunter or assassin, fight wars or make money off the back of them."

Perhaps the one thing that will resurrect space combat games is the thought of flying with and against human pilots. Microsoft's *Allegiance* (reviewed on page 72) will no doubt be the first of many online games, followed soon by *Jumpgate*, *Terminus* and *Battlecruiser Online*. And as in role-playing, real-time strategy and first-person games, space combat will soon become merged, taking in elements of each other into one big gaming genre, played out online or off.



⌚ *Terminus* will take *Elite* into the online world.



⌚ Space combat and strategy online with Microsoft's *Allegiance*.



⌚ *FreeLancer* is the sequel to *StarLancer* and looks amazing.

"Have you ever wondered what it would be like to launch a fighter from a carrier or space station?" asks Derek Smart. "Then fly that fighter down to a planet, land it, get out of the craft and walk around in first person? How about the ability to deploy marines and then be able to switch to any of them in first-person combat? All in single and multiplayer. That's the kind of new innovative gameplay that *Battlecruiser Millennium* is bringing to the genre this summer. Stuff that nobody has done before, but will most likely be cloned once others identify the fun factor."

Speaking of online games, David Braben offers another point of view. "These games will perhaps become genres in themselves. We are only just starting to break out of the media limitations — in other words where the computer or console dictates the style of game that can be implemented well. Like cinema, the different categories or genre of game will remain, but will continue to change."

Right now, although not as popular as they once were, space combat games offer such a wide variation of gaming styles that, more than any other genre, there really is something for everyone. Straight action fans are well catered for with *FreeSpace 2* and *StarLancer*. Simulation freaks have *Independence War* and *Battlecruiser*. If you like a more sedate trading-based adventure, *X - Beyond The Frontier* and it's soon-to-be-released sequel are more than worthy of the *Elite* tag. As a genre, space games have a fine heritage. The past is littered with classics and the future is certain to contain many more. Our advice is to keep watching the stars. ☐

1996 Gametek fluff it again by releasing *Battlecruiser 3000AD* unfinished. *Privateer 2: The Darkening* is released by EA. *Wing Commander IV* goes over the top in every department.



⌚ *Wing Commander IV: The Price of Freedom*

1997 *Star Wars* goes multiplayer with *X-Wing Vs TIE Fighter*. *Wing Commander Prophecy* signs an unfortunate end to the series on PC. *Star Trek: Starfleet Academy* does nothing for the *Star Trek* franchise.



⌚ *Star Trek: Starfleet Academy*

1998 *I-War* is heralded as the real man's space simulation. *Hardwar* is belatedly released. *Descent* spin-off *FreeSpace* picks up from where *Wing Commander* left off. *X-COM Interceptor* brings strategy to the genre.



⌚ *Descent: FreeSpace - The Great War*

1999 *X-Wing Alliance* is released. Chris Roberts's *Wing Commander* movie bombs at the cinema. *X - Beyond The Frontier* is released by THQ. *Descent 3* and *FreeSpace 2* are released.



⌚ *Wing Commander The Movie*

2000 *StarLancer* heralds a return to form from the *Wing Commander* creators. *Allegiance* is the first online-only space combat sim. More to follow...



⌚ *Allegiance*.

THANK YOU!!!

To all PC Zone readers voting Sierra™ Publisher of the Year and Valve™ Software as Developer of the Year

Half Life Generation

Opposing Force

HALF-LIFE
generation

HALF-LIFE
OPPOSING FORCE

SWAT 3
CLOSE QUARTERS BATTLE

HOMEWORLD

PHARAOH
Build a Kingdom.
Rule the Nile.
Live forever.

It seems you all know a good thing when you play it, like **Half Life™ Generation**, **Opposing Force**, **SWAT™ 3**, **Homeworld®** and **Pharaoh™**. Havas had a great year in 1999 and it's about time we thanked you all for supporting us. Hopefully you'll continue enjoying playing our games as much as we do developing them for you.

On that note don't forget to keep an eye out for **Diablo™ II** and **Ground Control™** ... coming soon!

DIABLO

GROUND
CONTROL



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PC ZONE

READER SURVEY 2000

We've got four of the latest high-performance graphics cards, the 3D Prophet II GTS from Hercules (rrp £249), to give away to the lucky readers who complete this survey and are drawn from the hat.

We want to hear what you think about *PC ZONE* and to find out more about what our readers do with their PCs at home. If you usually toss your survey in the bin, then STOP and give us some of your time. Whether you love *PC ZONE* or loathe it, your opinion matters, and you can help to make your magazine better.

The 3D Prophet II GTS is the latest in the Hercules range of cutting-edge graphics cards. Based on NVIDIA's new GeForce2 GTS (Giga Texel Shader), these cards have only just hit the shelves and they're worth £249 each. Fill in our survey and you'll stand a chance of getting your sticky hands on one before your neighbours. The cards boast a 2nd generation hardware transform and lighting engine and NVIDIA's Shading Rasterizer, which means the cards provide the best visuals your PC has ever seen.

So come on, give us five minutes of your time and we'll give you a magazine you won't be able to put down and the chance to win one of these fabulous prizes. Return your completed survey to us by July 1 2000 to ensure your chance of winning.

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PC ZONE

READER SURVEY 2000

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2 How many other people read your copy of PC ZONE?

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 1 ☐ 2
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 3 ☐ 4
 More than 3 ☐ 5

3 On a scale of 1 to 10, how do the following elements influence your decision to buy PC ZONE? (Where 1 = no influence: 10 = very influential)

- Contents of cover disk ☐ (8)
 What's reviewed ☐ (9)
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 Contains hints for games you have ☐ (13)
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4 Do you use the cover CDs with PC ZONE?

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 No ☐ 2

If No, go straight to Q6

5 On a scale of 1 to 10, please rate the importance of the following features on cover CDs (where 1 = not important and 10 = very important):

- Games demos (playable) ☐ (16)
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6 Which of the following type of covermount would you prefer?

- CD ☐ 1 (23)
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7 How would you rate the following sections of PC ZONE on a scale of 1 to 10 (where 1 = crap, 10 = excellent)?

- Bulletin ☐ (24)
 Previews ☐ (25)
 Reviews ☐ (26)
 Supertest ☐ (27)
 Budget Games ☐ (28)
 Feedback ☐ (29)
 How To... ☐ (30)
 Troubleshooter ☐ (31)
 Top 100 ☐ (32)
 CD Pages ☐ (33)
 Extended Play ☐ (34)
 The World According To... ☐ (35)

8 What do you think about the amount of coverage which PC ZONE gives to multi-player Internet games?

- Too much ☐ 1 (36)
 Just right ☐ 2
 Not enough ☐ 3

9 How do you rate the overall layout and design of PC ZONE?

- Excellent ☐ 1 (37)
 Good ☐ 2
 Average ☐ 3
 Poor ☐ 4

10 How do you rate the new reviews scoring system?

- Excellent ☐ 1 (38)
 Good ☐ 2
 Average ☐ 3
 Poor ☐ 4

11 What happens to your copy of PC ZONE after you have read it?

- I keep it for reference ☐ 1 (39)
 I keep parts for reference ☐ 2
 I pass it on to others ☐ 3
 Other ☐ 4

12 Do you keep the cover CDs?

- Yes ☐ 1 (40)
 No ☐ 2

13 Which of the following other magazines do you buy and how often?

	Regularly	Occasionally	Never
PC Format	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 (41)	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 (42)	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 (43)
PC Gamer	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 2
PC Home	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 3
PC Guide	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
PC Gaming World	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
PC Gameplay	<input type="checkbox"/> 6	<input type="checkbox"/> 6	<input type="checkbox"/> 6
Computer Active	<input type="checkbox"/> 7	<input type="checkbox"/> 7	<input type="checkbox"/> 7
Computer Shopper	<input type="checkbox"/> 8	<input type="checkbox"/> 8	<input type="checkbox"/> 8
Computer Buyer	<input type="checkbox"/> 9	<input type="checkbox"/> 9	<input type="checkbox"/> 9
Online Gamer	<input type="checkbox"/> 0	<input type="checkbox"/> 0	<input type="checkbox"/> 0
.net	<input type="checkbox"/> x	<input type="checkbox"/> x	<input type="checkbox"/> x
The Net	<input type="checkbox"/> v	<input type="checkbox"/> v	<input type="checkbox"/> v
Online Gamer	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 (44)	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 (45)	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 (46)
Maxim	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 2
Loaded	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 3
FHM	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 4

14 Is PC ZONE better, the same, or worse in your opinion than the following magazines?

PC ZONE is...	Better than	Same as	Worse than
PC Format	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 (47)	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 (48)	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 (49)
PC Gaming World	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 2
PC Gamer	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 3
PC Gameplay	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 4

ABOUT YOUR PC

15 What kind of processor does your PC have and what is its clock-speed? (If you have more than one PC, tick the one you usually use for playing games.)

Processor		Clock-speed	
Pentium or below	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 (50)	133MHz or lower	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 (51)
Pentium II	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	133-233MHz	<input type="checkbox"/> 2
Pentium III or higher	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	266-333MHz	<input type="checkbox"/> 3
AMD K62	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	366-450MHz	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
AMD Athlon	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	450-500MHz	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
		600-750MHz	<input type="checkbox"/> 6
		750MHz or above	<input type="checkbox"/> 7

16 In total, how much RAM (memory) do you have fitted?

31Mb or less	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 (52)
32-63Mb	<input type="checkbox"/> 2
64-127Mb	<input type="checkbox"/> 3
128-255Mb	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
More than 256Mb	<input type="checkbox"/> 5

17 Which of the following games consoles do you own or intend to buy?

	Own	Intend to buy
I do not own/intend to buy	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 (53)	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 (54)
Sony PlayStation	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 2
Sony PlayStation II	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 3
Nintendo 64	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
Sega Dreamcast	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
PX2	<input type="checkbox"/> 6	<input type="checkbox"/> 6
Other games console	<input type="checkbox"/> 7	<input type="checkbox"/> 7

WHAT YOU DO WITH YOUR PC

18 How many hours a week do you spend on the following:

	Playing games offline	Playing games online	Playing network games
Less than 1 hr	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 (55)	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 (56)	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 (57)
1-2 hrs	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 2
3-4 hrs	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 3
5-6 hrs	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
6-10 hrs	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
10-15 hrs	<input type="checkbox"/> 6	<input type="checkbox"/> 6	<input type="checkbox"/> 6
15-20 hrs	<input type="checkbox"/> 7	<input type="checkbox"/> 7	<input type="checkbox"/> 7
20 hrs or more	<input type="checkbox"/> 8	<input type="checkbox"/> 8	<input type="checkbox"/> 8

19 Are you put off buying a title because of the minimum hardware specification required?

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 (58)
No	<input type="checkbox"/> 2

20 Have you ever upgraded your PC in order to make it compatible with a game you wanted?

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 (59)
No	<input type="checkbox"/> 2

If yes, which game was this _____

21 Approximately what percentage of time spent on your PC is taken up with playing games?

100%	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 (60)
76-99%	<input type="checkbox"/> 2
51-75%	<input type="checkbox"/> 3
26-50%	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
25% or less	<input type="checkbox"/> 5

22 What types of game do you play both offline and online?

	Offline	Online
Action	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 (61)	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 (62)
Adventure	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 2
Sports	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 3
Strategy	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
Simulations	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
Role playing	<input type="checkbox"/> 6	<input type="checkbox"/> 6
Arcade	<input type="checkbox"/> 7	<input type="checkbox"/> 7
Driving	<input type="checkbox"/> 8	<input type="checkbox"/> 8
War	<input type="checkbox"/> 9	<input type="checkbox"/> 9
Puzzle	<input type="checkbox"/> 0	<input type="checkbox"/> 0

THE INTERNET

23 Do you use your PC online?

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 (63)
No	<input type="checkbox"/> 2

If No, go straight to Q32

24 How do you currently connect to the Internet?

ADSL	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 (64)
Modem 14.4	<input type="checkbox"/> 2
Modem 33.3	<input type="checkbox"/> 3
Modem 56	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
ISDN	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
Cable	<input type="checkbox"/> 6
Satellite	<input type="checkbox"/> 7
Through a games console	<input type="checkbox"/> 8

25 Are you planning to upgrade to a high-speed account (ISDN or above)?

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 (65)
No	<input type="checkbox"/> 2
Don't know	<input type="checkbox"/> 3

26 What do you use your PC online for?

Games	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 (66)
Surfing	<input type="checkbox"/> 2
Shopping	<input type="checkbox"/> 3
Finance	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
Education	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
Work	<input type="checkbox"/> 6
Hobby	<input type="checkbox"/> 7
MP3	<input type="checkbox"/> 8
Adult entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> 9

27 Have you accessed the PC ZONE website?

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 (67)
No	<input type="checkbox"/> 2
Didn't know it existed	<input type="checkbox"/> 3

28 If you have accessed the PC ZONE website, how important do you think the following sections are on a scale of 1-10 (where 1=not important and 10=very important)?

Bulletin	<input type="checkbox"/> (68)
Download	<input type="checkbox"/> (69)
Previews	<input type="checkbox"/> (70)
Reviews	<input type="checkbox"/> (71)
Features	<input type="checkbox"/> (72)
Hints 'n' Tips	<input type="checkbox"/> (73)
Classifieds	<input type="checkbox"/> (74)
Forums	<input type="checkbox"/> (75)
Ha Ha Ha	<input type="checkbox"/> (76)
The Mag	<input type="checkbox"/> (77)
Subscribe	<input type="checkbox"/> (78)

29 How often do you visit the PC ZONE website?

Daily	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 (79)
2-3 times per week	<input type="checkbox"/> 2
Weekly	<input type="checkbox"/> 3
2-3 times a month	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
Less often than this	<input type="checkbox"/> 5

30 If you have ever received an email newsletter from PC ZONE, how do you rate it?

Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 (80)
Good	<input type="checkbox"/> 2
Average	<input type="checkbox"/> 3
Poor	<input type="checkbox"/> 4

31 How many hours do you spend using the Internet for things other than gaming?

< 1 hour	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 (81)
1-2 hours	<input type="checkbox"/> 2
3-4 hours	<input type="checkbox"/> 3
5-6 hours	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
6 hours or more	<input type="checkbox"/> 5

WHAT YOU BUY

32 Roughly, how often have you upgraded your PC since you first bought one?

Every 6 months	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 (82)
Every 6-12 months	<input type="checkbox"/> 2
Every 1-2 years	<input type="checkbox"/> 3
Every 2-3 years	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
Less often	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
Haven't upgraded yet	<input type="checkbox"/> 6

33 Are you intending to replace or upgrade your computer in the next 12 months?

	Replace	Upgrade
Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 (83)	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 (84)
No	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 2
Not sure	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 3

34 If yes, what do you intend to buy or upgrade to?

Pentium	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 (10)
Pentium II	<input type="checkbox"/> 2
Pentium III	<input type="checkbox"/> 3
AMD Athlon	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
AMD K62	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
PC with other processor	<input type="checkbox"/> 6

➔ **35 Do you currently own or intend to buy any of the following for your PC?**

	Own	Intend to buy
Modem	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 (11)	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 (12)
Removable storage	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 2
Sound card	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 3
Graphics card	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
Hard drive	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
Extra RAM	<input type="checkbox"/> 6	<input type="checkbox"/> 6
DVD drive	<input type="checkbox"/> 7	<input type="checkbox"/> 7
Speakers	<input type="checkbox"/> 8	<input type="checkbox"/> 8
17in or bigger monitor	<input type="checkbox"/> 9	<input type="checkbox"/> 9

36 Do you currently own or intend to buy any of the following other products?

	Own	Intend to buy
MP3	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 (13)	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 (14)
Digital camera	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 2
Scanner	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 3
Printer	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
WAP phone	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 5

37 Which of the following types of games controller do you currently own or intend to buy?

	Own	Intend to buy
Force feedback Joystick	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 (15)	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 (16)
Joystick	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 2
Force feedback wheel	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 3
Steering wheel	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
Gamepad	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
Gaming mouse	<input type="checkbox"/> 6	<input type="checkbox"/> 6

38 How much do you intend to spend on hardware for your PC and/or for a new PC over the next year?

Nothing	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 (17)
Up to £299	<input type="checkbox"/> 2
£300-£599	<input type="checkbox"/> 3
£600-£999	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
£1000-£1499	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
£1500-£1999	<input type="checkbox"/> 6
£2000 or more	<input type="checkbox"/> 7

39 On average, how much do you spend on PC games in three months?

Up to £49	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 (18)
£50-£99	<input type="checkbox"/> 2
£100-£199	<input type="checkbox"/> 3
£200-£399	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
£400 or over	<input type="checkbox"/> 5

40 Which of the following influence your decision to buy a game?

Review in <i>PC ZONE</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 (19)
Review in other mags	<input type="checkbox"/> 2
Review on the Internet	<input type="checkbox"/> 3
Review on TV/radio	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
Subject matter/genre	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
Word of mouth/comments online	<input type="checkbox"/> 6
Packaging	<input type="checkbox"/> 7
Games demo	<input type="checkbox"/> 8
Advertising	<input type="checkbox"/> 9

41 Where do you typically buy your games software?

(Please tick all that apply)

Mail order	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 (20)
Online	<input type="checkbox"/> 2
Virgin	<input type="checkbox"/> 3
Electronic Boutique	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
HMV	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
Our Price	<input type="checkbox"/> 6
Game	<input type="checkbox"/> 7
WH Smith	<input type="checkbox"/> 8
Blockbuster	<input type="checkbox"/> 9
@Jakarta	<input type="checkbox"/> 0
Woolworths	<input type="checkbox"/> x
Supermarkets	<input type="checkbox"/> v
Dixons	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 (21)
PC World	<input type="checkbox"/> 2
Independent retailer	<input type="checkbox"/> 3

42 Have you ever purchased a product or service as a result of seeing it reviewed or advertised in *PC ZONE*?

	Review	Advert
Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 (22)	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 (23)
No	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 2

ABOUT YOU

43 How old are you?

701 Under 15	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 (24)
702 15-17	<input type="checkbox"/> 2
703 18-24	<input type="checkbox"/> 3
704 25-34	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
705 35-44	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
706 45-54	<input type="checkbox"/> 6
707 55-64	<input type="checkbox"/> 7
708 65 or over	<input type="checkbox"/> 8

44 Which of the following best describes your occupation?

601 Senior managerial/senior professional	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 (25)
602 Managerial/professional	<input type="checkbox"/> 2
603 Executive	<input type="checkbox"/> 3
604 Clerical	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
605 Work from home/self-employed	<input type="checkbox"/> 5

(Cont...)

606 Manual	<input type="checkbox"/> 6
607 Unemployed	<input type="checkbox"/> 7
608 Retired	<input type="checkbox"/> 8
609 In full-time education	<input type="checkbox"/> 9
610 Other	<input type="checkbox"/> 0

45 How much do you earn in a year?

801 Under £10,000	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 (26)
802 £10,000-£14,999	<input type="checkbox"/> 2
803 £15,000-£19,999	<input type="checkbox"/> 3
804 £20,000-£24,999	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
805 £25,000-£29,999	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
806 £30,000-£39,999	<input type="checkbox"/> 6
807 £40,000 or over	<input type="checkbox"/> 7

46 What is your sex?

Male	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 (27)
Female	<input type="checkbox"/> 2

47 Do you have children?

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 (28)
No	<input type="checkbox"/> 2

48 Do you live...

With your parents	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 (29)
With partner/family	<input type="checkbox"/> 2
With friends	<input type="checkbox"/> 3
Alone	<input type="checkbox"/> 4

49 Where in the house is your PC?

Your room/bedroom	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 (30)
Lounge	<input type="checkbox"/> 2
Study	<input type="checkbox"/> 3
Other room	<input type="checkbox"/> 4

50 What national newspapers do you buy?

Daily Mail	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 (31)
Sun	<input type="checkbox"/> 2
Times	<input type="checkbox"/> 3
Daily Telegraph	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
Mirror	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
Express	<input type="checkbox"/> 6
Guardian	<input type="checkbox"/> 7
Independent	<input type="checkbox"/> 8
Financial Times	<input type="checkbox"/> 9
Evening Standard	<input type="checkbox"/> 0
Daily Star	<input type="checkbox"/> x

READER SURVEY COMPETITION

Thank you for your participation and time. In order to be entered into the FREE prize draw please fill in your details below, and return your survey to our freepost address by July 1 2000.

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Address

Postcode

Email address

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Q 0007

➔ Please tick this box if you do not wish to receive details of further special offers from companies other than Dennis Publishing OR if you are under 18 years of age. ☐

★ Please return to: *PC ZONE* Reader Survey 2000, Freepost WD7, Bristol, BS32 0ZZ

HMV

seriously addictive...



VAMPIRE: THE MASQUERADE - REDEMPTION

Based on the well-known *White Wolf* role-playing system, *Vampire: The Masquerade - Redemption* is an Action RPG in which the player survives as a vampire over a span of 800 years. It features four fully 3D gothic cities set in both the dark ages and modern times, a party-based, role-playing system, complex storyline and a faithful online re-creation of the popular paper-based version.



STAR TREK: CONQUEST ONLINE

After supernatural power and immortality, what else could you possibly want as Q? Try the bragging rights that come with outwitting fellow Star Trek fans online. Unfortunately, they happen to have the same pompous desire for galactic amusement. To become top Q, you must manipulate an exotic array of characters and ships from the Star Trek universe, while outmaneuvering other players in a strategic contest of almighty cat and mouse. Who will prevail?



TACHYON: THE FRINGE

Playing as Jake Logan you are an intergalactic rebel and one of the best mercenary pilots in the SOL System. Caught in the middle of a violent conflict on the fringe of the galaxy - your ability to survive will depend on the only means you know how - as a gun for hire. As well as stunning graphics and cut-scenes, *Tachyon* also has an absorbing movie style, single-player storyline coupled with gigantic multi-player options.



DAIKATANA

You are Hiro Miyamoto. You and two friends, Superfly Johnson and Mikiko Ebihara are travelling through time on a mission to collect weapons, beach objects, discover secrets, and fight off an array of monsters. Featuring hardcore single-player, intense multi-player, superior artificial intelligence and four time periods. "Absolutely brilliant." PC Zone "The most diverse 3D blaster yet." PC Gamer

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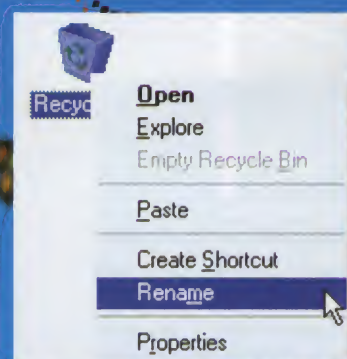
WINDOWS UNLOCKED

Think you know Windows, eh? Ha. We hereby bet you a fiver* you don't know half the stuff on this page. So get reading and get learning

★ TIPTRONIC Phil Wand

*This is a complete lie. So sue us.

“Let's face it, nobody uses their Recycle Bin to recycle files. They use it to duplicate JPEG images that would make an Amsterdam whoremaster reach for his sick bag”



① What the hell does the Recycle Bin do anyway?

1 How to rename the Recycle Bin

Let's face it, nobody uses their Recycle Bin to recycle their files. They use it to delete dodgy email attachments, duplicate MP3 files and JPEG images that would make an Amsterdam whoremaster reach for his sick bag.

Start the 'Registry Editor'. Browse to the `HKEY_CLASSES_ROOT\CLSID\{645FF040-5081-101B-9F08-00AA002F954E}` subfolder and select 'ShellFolder'. Double-click on the 'Attributes' entry, delete the eight digit number and type '50 01 00 20' in its place. Close the 'Registry Editor'. You should now be able to right-click on the Recycle Bin icon and select the new 'Rename' option from the pop-up menu.

2 How to delete old entries from the Add/Remove control panel

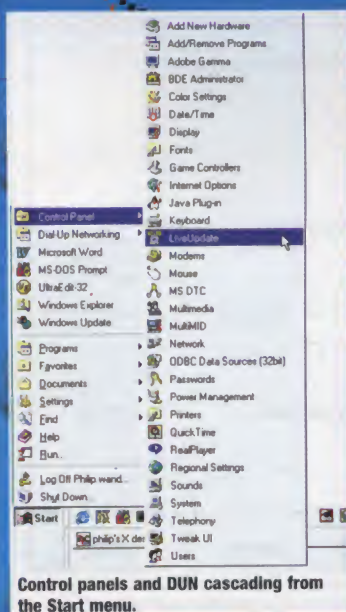
Often you'll see programs and games that no longer exist shown in the Add/Remove Programs box. To clean things up, start the Registry Editor. Browse to the `HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE\SOFTWARE\Microsoft\Windows\CurrentVersion\Uninstall` subfolder and delete the relevant key entries. All changes will then take effect immediately.

WINDOWS UNLOCKED

Tools	Table	Window	Help
Undo Stupid Changes			Ctrl+Alt+Z
Read Boss's Mind...			
Adjust Boss's Attitude			Ctrl+A
Create Idea...			Ctrl+C
Insert Brilliance			
Extend Deadline			
Enhance Salary			
Find Better Client...			F3
Restore Wasted Evenings			
Save Weekend			Ctrl+...

A little known Microsoft tool.

30 THINGS EVERY WINDOWS 98 USER SHOULD KNOW



Control panels and DUN cascading from the Start menu.

3 How to add cascading menus to the Start menu

TOP TIP Cascading menus appear as offshoots of the Start menu and allow direct access to system resources that would otherwise take you several steps to reach.

Right-click on the 'Start' button and select 'Explore' from the pop-up menu that appears. Go straight to the 'File' menu and select the 'New Entry' at the top. Now choose 'New Folder'. Name the folder one of the following entries. The words before the initial period denote the cascading menu type: 'Control Panel.(21EC2020-3AEA-1069-A2DD-08002B30309D)', 'Dial Up Networking.(992CFFA0-F557-101A-88EC-00DD010CCC46)', 'Fonts.(BD84B380-8CA2-1069-AB1D-08000948F534)', 'Network Neighborhood.(208D2C60-3AEA-1069-A2D7-08002B30309D)'

'Briefcase.(85BBD920-42A0-1069-A2E4-08002B30309D)', 'Printers.(2227A280-3AEA-1069-A2DE-08002B30309D)', 'URL History.(FF935560-C2A7-11CF-BFF4-444553540000)', 'My Computer.(20D04FE0-3AEA-1069-A2D8-08002B30309D)'

4 How to play a MIDI file when Windows starts up

Go to the 'Sounds' control panel and make sure you haven't assigned anything to the Start Windows event. Now right-click on the 'Start' button and choose 'Explore'. Open up the 'Programs' branch and select the 'Start Up' folder. Go to the 'File' menu and choose 'New' followed by 'Shortcut'. Create a link to a MIDI file of your choosing. Once complete, right-click on the new shortcut and select 'Properties'. Click the 'Shortcut' tab and insert the following text in front of the existing filename entry:

'c:\windows\mplayer.exe /play /close' Select 'Minimized' from the Run drop-down select box.

5 How to increase your download speed

Right-click on the 'Network Neighborhood' icon on your desktop and choose 'Properties'. Double-click on the 'Dial-Up Adapter' entry. Select the 'Advanced' tab. Select 'IP Packet Size' from the selection box and highlight 'Small' in the value box. If you are a Cable or ADSL user, or experience problems after changing this setting, leave it set to 'Automatic'.

6 How to find out who's accessing your computer

This will probably scare the bejeezus out of you, but here goes. Open a DOS box and type:

netstat -a

← This shows all TCP/IP network activity centred around your computer. If you use a packet intensive program such as ICQ, Napster or PowWow, the list will be as long as your arm. It'll show every IP address of everyone who's sent you a message within the last few minutes, and also the IP address of anyone you have recently contacted. If you use:

netstat 1

the statistics will update at a regular interval to show you new connections as they appear. You'll be able to see which port is being used on your machine (designated by the number after the colon) and also the destination IP address.

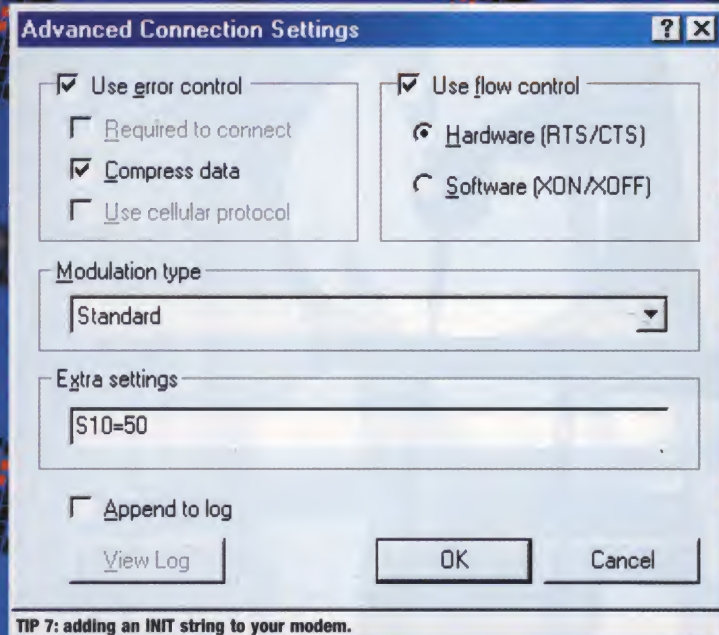
7 How to stop getting disconnected from your ISP

There are a number of things which may cause you to get disconnected from your ISP, ranging from poor line quality to your mum picking up the phone downstairs. Believe it or not, there are a few bodes around them.

Open up your control panels and select 'Modem'. Select the 'Properties' tab and click the 'Advanced' button. In the 'Extra Settings' field at the bottom add:

S10=50

This causes the modem to hang around for up to five seconds before chucking you



TIP 7: adding an INIT string to your modem.

off. If whoever lives with you insists on using Call Waiting, make sure you turn it off before you go online – the 'beep' tones will confuse your modem and cause it to drop the line.

Also, your trouble could be down to the volume of your telephone line. If you

feel it's on the low side (normally if you live a good distance from the nearest exchange), simply phone up BT and ask them to turn up the gain to your number. You could also ask them if they've used a DAC to connect you up – if so, ask if they can remove it.

8 How to hide items in your Start menu

You've probably got a Start menu that snakes into the four corners of your desktop each time you open it. So hide some of the stuff you don't need or don't use to save you tripping up over it

each time. Right-click on the 'Start' button and choose 'Explore'. Click on the 'Programs' folder and then select the icon or folder you want to hide. Right-click and select 'Properties', then simply put a tick in the 'Hidden' checkbox and press 'OK'.

9 What that stupid Windows key is for

TOP TIP You'd have thought that the Windows key was designed by someone who has never played games, given that a single jab results in the appearance of your Start menu and the disappearance of *Half-Life*. Before you resort to sticking a fork under it to lever the little bugger out, read the following list of shortcuts:

Windows key + F1 Open Windows Help

Windows key + e Run Windows Explorer

Windows key + m Minimise all open windows

Windows key + Shift + m Undo minimise all open windows

Windows key + Tab Cycle through taskbar program buttons

Windows key + r Open the Run dialog

Windows key + d Show/Hide Desktop

Windows key + Pause Open the System Properties

Windows key + f Find Files

Windows key + Ctrl + f Find Computer

POWER TOOLS

How to fly the Registry Editor

The registry is a database of program properties that Windows uses to keep a track of all the applications you have installed on your system. It includes everything from preferences and options to window positions. It makes your copy of Windows and everything within it personal to you. Importantly, it also defines how Windows works. This means you can fiddle about and tweak it to alter the way the whole operating system works.

Or the way it *doesn't* work. Because changing Registry settings can be a dangerous business if you get things wrong. You could lock yourself out of Windows for a start. You could also inadvertently trash all manner of things, lose passwords, and force a complete reinstallation. So before you go striding on, *back things up*.

To run the Registry Editor

1. Click the 'Start' button and choose 'Run'.
2. Type 'regedit' in the box and press 'Enter'.

To back up the registry

1. Start the 'Registry Editor'.
2. Click on the 'Registry' menu and choose 'Export Registry File'.
3. Browse to a location where you can save the database.
4. Type a name and press 'Save'.

To restore the registry

1. Start the 'Registry Editor'.
2. Click on the 'Registry' menu and choose 'Import Registry File'.
3. Browse to the location of your saved database and press 'Open'.

The Registry Editor is actually very straightforward to use. Essentially, information is stored in a similar manner to the folders and files on your hard drive: folders in the editor are called 'Keys'. The files are called 'Values'. Top level keys include: HKEY_CLASSES_ROOT – sets how Windows deals with file types) HKEY_CLASSES_ROOT – settings pertaining to the currently logged on user. HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE – settings pertaining to the whole system.

Whenever you see a key location, for example: HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE\SOFTWARE\Microsoft\Windows\CurrentVersion\Setup you'll need to open the HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE key and then browse to the various folders the same as you would in Explorer. You can change the values stored in the keys by double-clicking on them and typing.

Accessories Properties

General | Sharing | Web Sharing



Accessories

Type: File Folder
Location: C:\WINDOWS\Start Menu\Programs
Size: 10.7KB (10,978 bytes), 122,880 bytes used
Contains: 30 Files, 6 Folders

MS-DOS name: ACCESS~1
Created: 25 August 1997 18:32:35

Attributes: ☐ Read-only ☒ Hidden
☐ Archive ☐ System
☐ Enable thumbnail view

OK

Cancel

Apply

TIP 8: check the 'Hidden' box and it disappears.

10 Speed up Windows restarts

Simply hold down the 'Shift' key when selecting Restart from the Shut Down Windows screen.

11 Delete a redundant control panel

There are occasions when you want to delete a control panel. And it's easy. Open the 'C:\Windows\System' directory and look for all files with a CPL extension. To check each one before you delete it, right-click and select 'Open with Control Panel'.

12 Make Dial-Up Networking remember your password

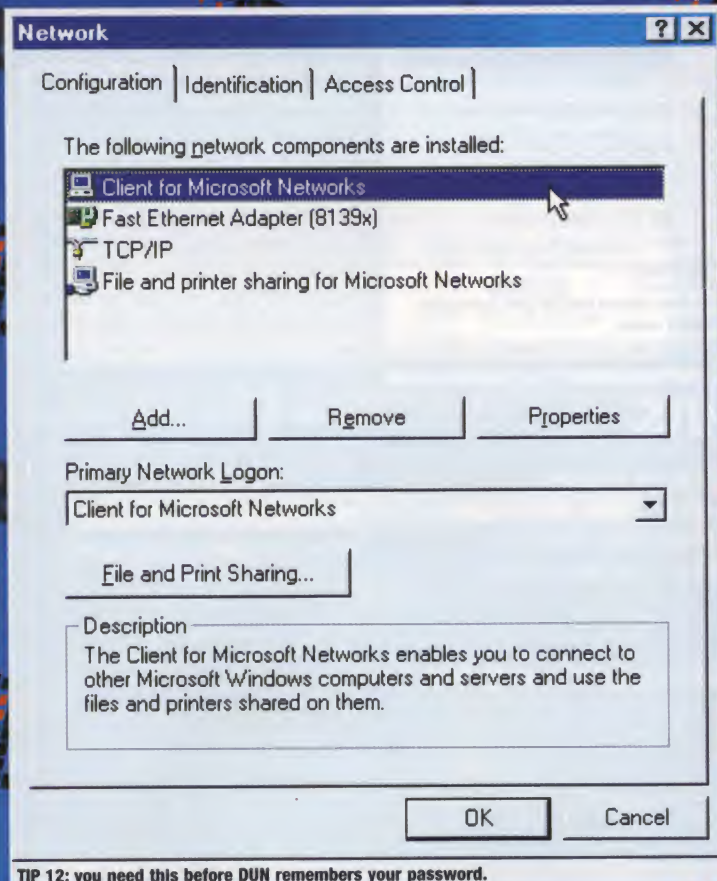
When you first connected to the Internet, you'll have supplied the log-on password for your DUN connection. If you checked the 'Save Password' checkbox beneath, Windows should recall this password for you next time around. If it doesn't appear, chances are you haven't installed the Microsoft Networking client. Right-click on the 'Network Neighborhood' icon on your desktop and select 'Properties'. In the 'Configuration' tab click on 'Add' and then 'Client'. Click 'Add' and scroll down the vendors to the 'Microsoft' entry. Double-click on the 'Client for Microsoft Networks' item. Press 'OK'.

13 Ensure your system is completely up to date

TOP TIP Visit windowsupdate.microsoft.com and click on the 'Product Updates' link. This takes you to a fully automated online wizard that automatically downloads every component you're missing or that's in need of an update.

14 Masterful file management

If you open up Windows Explorer ('Windows key + e') and drag an object from one place to another on the same drive, you'll move it and not copy it. If you drag it to a different drive, you'll copy it. If you drag an application, you'll create a shortcut. If you ask us, it's all needlessly confusing.



TIP 12: you need this before DUN remembers your password.

To modify this behaviour, hold down the 'Ctrl' key to always copy, and 'Shift' to always move. To make a shortcut, hold down 'Shift' and 'Ctrl' together. To abort any drag operation, simply hit 'Esc' in the middle of it.

Other useful shortcuts include 'Backspace' to move up to the parent folder, 'Ctrl + a' to select all objects within a view and 'F5' to update the contents. You can also use standard cut, copy and paste key combinations ('Ctrl + x', 'Ctrl + c', 'Ctrl + v') to manage your files. For example, if you want to move a file, simply select it and press 'Ctrl + x'. To paste it into its new location, select the destination folder and

press 'Ctrl + v'. 'Ctrl + v' followed by 'Ctrl + v' this makes an instant duplication of the selected file.

Remember you can always press 'Ctrl + z' to undo a file operation if you screw up or, better still, drag and drop with the right mouse button – this brings up a small, context-sensitive menu which allows you to pick and choose from a list of options.

15 Changing your hard drive icon

First, find or create a new icon that you want to associate with your drive. You can either download it from one of the many online icon libraries, or search

around your PC for files ending in .ICO. Next, go to the root directory of the drive in question and create a text file called 'autorun.inf'. Open this file up in Notepad and type the following:

```
[autorun]
icon=<filepath>
```

Where filepath is the path and filename (eg c:\mystuff\bomb.ico) of the icon. If you want to use one of the Windows embedded icons, you'll need an icon explorer tool such as Microangelo. This allows you to view the contents of library files, for example shell32.dll in the Windows System directory. All you then need do is modify the autorun.inf file to point to the library and specify an icon number thus:

```
[autorun]
icon=c:\windows\system\shell32.dll,41
```

This refers to icon number 41 held within the shell32 Windows library (a tree).

Once you've saved the autorun file, simply go to the drive in question and hit 'F5' to refresh the view. Hey presto – new icon.

16 Pretend you're a Macintosh

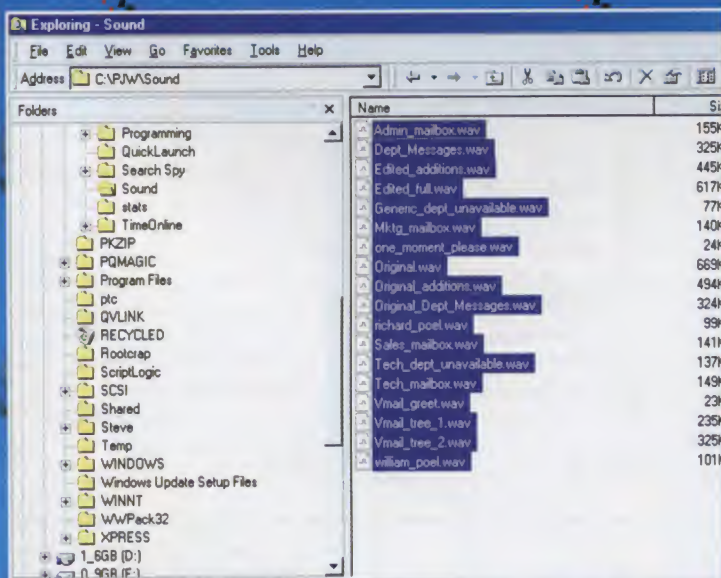
You can easily drag and drop the Windows taskbar to any edge of the screen. Move it to the top to look like a mutant Apple Mac, move it to the left or right edges and you'll understand why it defaults to the bottom.

17 Finding out your IP address

If you're a dial-up user with a server assigned IP address, it's often useful to find out what it is. Simply click the 'Start' button and click 'Run'. Type in 'winipconfig' and press 'Return'.

18 Drag And Print

TOP TIP Hit the 'Start' button, go to the 'Settings' menu and select 'Printers'. Right-click and drag your printer to your desktop and select 'Create Shortcut Here'. If you want to print a document, such as a Microsoft Word letter, drag and drop the file onto the new shortcut.



TIP 14: Icons that have been cut and are ready to be pasted are greyed out in Explorer.

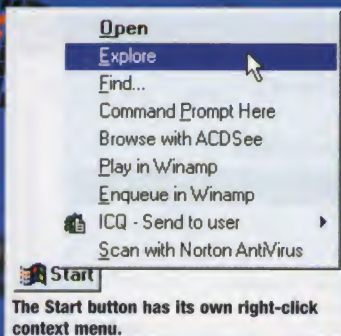


TIP 15: all the 75 icon objects held within shell32.dll.

19 Instant screen grab

If you want to get a screen capture of your entire Windows work area, hit the 'Print Screen' button in the top right corner of your keyboard. If you want to grab just the active frame, hold down the 'Alt' key beforehand. This copies bitmap data to the Windows clipboard.

Remember, if you're running your screen at a high resolution (1,280 x 1600 or above) then there will be a lot of data held in the clipboard, which will be using up vital RAM.



The Start button has its own right-click context menu.

KEYBOARD SHORTCUTS

OK, so now you're asking, "Why do we need to know keyboard shortcuts when we've got mice?" Well, the simple fact is that the quickest way to get things done involves using both the mouse and the keyboard – just like you do when you play *Quake* or *Half-Life*.

WINDOWS EXPLORER AND FOLDER VIEWS

Key	Action
F2	Rename
F3	Find
Ctrl + x	Cut selected file
Ctrl + c	Copy selected file
Ctrl + v	Paste selected file
Shift + Del	Bypass Recycle Bin
Alt + Enter	Show properties
Ctrl + Drag	Copy a file
Shift + Drag	Move a file
Ctrl + Home	Top of tree
Ctrl + End	Bottom of tree
Ctrl + Shift + Drag	Create shortcut
Shift + F10	Equivalent to right-click context menu
F4	Activate drop-down directory list
F5	Refresh current view
F6	Switch between active panes
Ctrl + G	Go to a specific path
Ctrl + Z	Undo last file action
Ctrl + A	Select all objects
Backspace	Up to parent folder
Shift + Close	Closes current folder view and all parents
Num *	Expand all folders beneath current folder
Num + or Right Arrow	Expand selection
Num - or Left Arrow	Collapse selection

PROPERTIES VIEWS

Key	Action
Alt + Double-click	Open properties view
Ctrl + Tab	Switch tabs

OPEN/SAVE DIALOG BOXES

Key	Action
F4	Activate drop-down directory list
F5	Refresh current view
Backspace	Up to parent folder

GENERAL COMMANDS

Key	Action
F1	Help
F10	Focus a window's main menu
Shift + F10	Equivalent to right-click context menu
Ctrl + Esc	Open up the Start Menu
Alt + Tab	Switch between active applications
Shift while inserting CD	Bypass autorun
Alt + m	with taskbar focus Minimise all windows
Print Screen	Capture screen to clipboard
Alt + Print Screen	Capture active window to clipboard

20 Adding Start Menu items – the easy way

Although Microsoft's various Wizards are a godsend for newbies, they're actually a major hindrance to experienced users who view them as nothing more than a patronising sequence of Next buttons. The Start menu is a case in point. The Wizard way would be to right-click on the 'Taskbar', choose 'Properties', click the 'Start Menu Programs' tab, click 'Add' and then follow the screens. If you know how to use Explorer, there's a much easier route: simply right-click on the 'Start' button and choose 'Explore'. If you have Internet Explorer 4 or above installed, you can also drag and drop shortcuts to and from the Start Menu simply by clicking and holding.

21a Shortcuts to Explorer

There are a number of easy ways to open up Windows Explorer without having to click on an icon buried deep in your Start Menu. For starters, you could right-click on the 'My Computer' icon and choose 'Explore' that way. If you have a Windows key on your keyboard, hold it down and press 'e' to do the same job. You can even hold down 'Shift' and double-click on the 'My Computer' icon – this technique also works for 'Network Neighborhood'.

21b Shortcuts to Properties

As with shortcuts to Explorer, there are a number of easy keyboard shortcuts which allow you to get straight to object properties. If you want to view the properties of a file, for example a Microsoft Word document (so you can see the author and so on), hold down the 'Alt' key before you double-click. You could also press

'Alt + Enter'. And if you want to see your system properties, hold down the 'Alt' key and double-click on the 'My Computer' icon. To view your network and network protocol settings, hold down 'Alt' and double-click on the 'Network Neighborhood' icon.

22 Back to the good old days

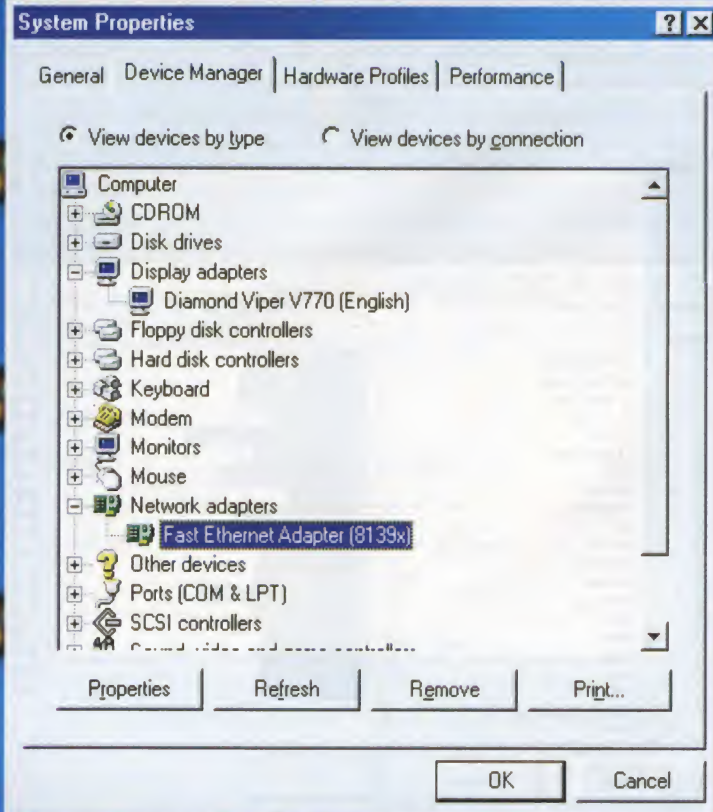
STUPID TIP

After all this talk of the Windows Explorer, there's a chance you don't like it. If that's the case, why not try the old Windows v3.1 way of doing things? Click the 'Start' button, select 'Run' and then type 'winfile' followed by 'Enter'. As if by magic, the old-style file manager appears. You can also fire up the old style Program Manager by typing 'progman'.

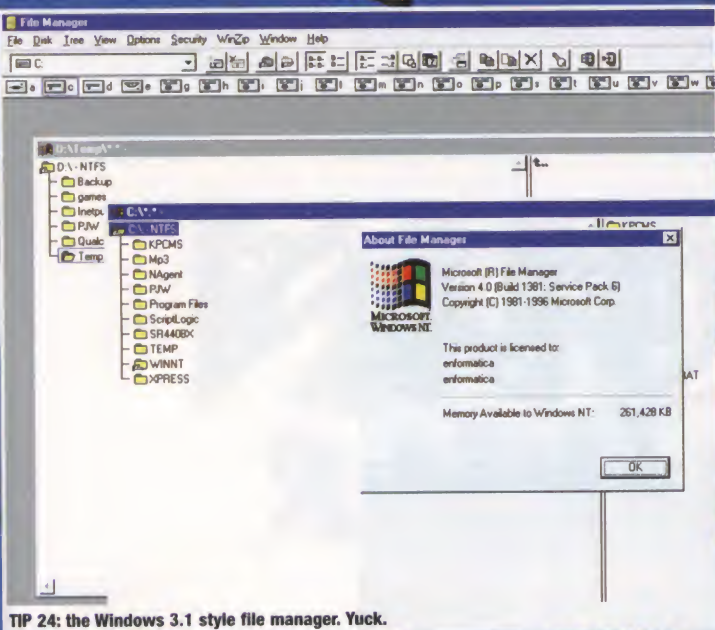
23 Quick selection of files and folders with the keyboard

If you open a folder view with hundreds of icons, it can often be a pain to browse through them all looking for a particular file. So instead of tugging on the scrollbars with the mouse, type the first letter of the filename – Windows jumps to the first occurrence of a filename starting with the key you typed. Press the same letter again and it'll step through all the files that begin with that letter.

This technique also works in the Start menu. Right-click on the 'Start' button and choose 'Explore'. Now number your applications by renaming them and preceding the name with a digit, for example '1 Adobe Photoshop'. To access Photoshop, simply hit 'Ctrl + Esc' to open the Start menu and then hit '1' on the keyboard to launch it.



TIP 21b: Alt + double-click on the 'My Computer' icon.



TIP 24: the Windows 3.1 style file manager. Yuck.

24 Installing to a group folder on the Start Menu

When games or applications install, they often ask you if you want to put the icons inside a specific group on your Start menu, for example in a new folder called Viper Racing. If you specify a pathname in front of that group, for example 'Games\Viper Racing', the new folder will end up being installed *beneath* Games. Use this technique with each new application you install – put games in a 'Games' folder, utilities in a 'Tools' folder and so on – and things will begin to look a lot less messy.

25 Insert your Windows CD-ROM and press OK

TIP Fed up with being asked to insert your original Windows CD-ROM? OK then. First, copy the 'CAB' files to a folder either on a local hard drive or on the network (if it's on a network, make sure you have a letter mapped to that driver). Next, open up the 'Registry Editor'. Browse to the following folder: 'HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE\SOFTWARE\Microsoft\Windows\CurrentVersion\Setup'. Double-click on the 'Source' entry and enter the path that points to your CD-ROM files. Next time Windows needs files from the CD-ROM, it'll do so automatically and without asking you first.

26 More disk space

You could claim up to an additional 10Mb by deleting some of the nonsense that comes pre-installed on modern Windows machines. For starters, head over to your 'C:\Windows\Help' folder and delete all the '.AVI' (movie) files – they total around 7Mb and are pointless. Then head over to 'C:\Windows\Online Services' and delete the entire folder – it contains information on ISPs such as CompuServe and AOL. If you already have a dial-up, these really aren't worth bothering with, and their absence will free up around 1Mb of space. Next head over to 'C:\Windows\Temp' and trash all the temporary files here (unless for some bizarre reason you actually keep stuff here). If applications crash, they often leave scratch fragments in this folder and the wasted space can *really* mount up.

27 Change ownership

Want to change the default owner of your system? Open up the Registry Editor. Browse to the following folder: 'HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE\SOFTWARE\Microsoft\Windows\CurrentVersion'. Look for the 'RegisteredOrganization' and 'RegisteredOwner' keys, then simply double-click and make any changes as appropriate.

28 Sort the Start menu alphabetically

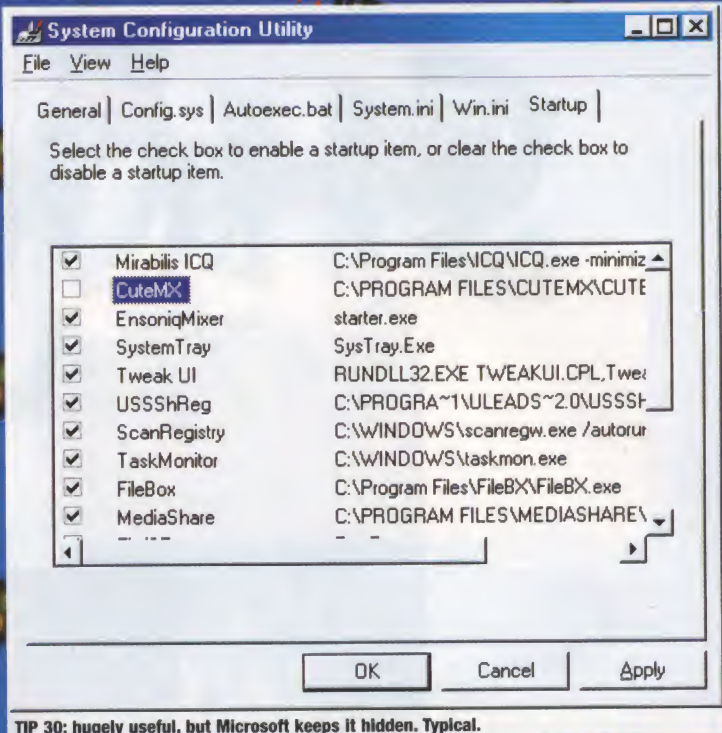
If you're using Windows 98 with Internet Explorer 4 or above, chances are the Start menu is structured in a pretty random fashion, with new programs being added in at the bottom of folders rather than being filed alphabetically. To get things sorted out, open up the Registry Editor and browse to: 'HKEY_CURRENT_USER\Software\Microsoft\Windows\CurrentVersion\Explorer\MenuOrder\Start Menu\Menu'. Look for the key named 'Order' and simply delete it. You'll then need to restart the machine before any of the changes will take effect.

29 Reacquainting yourself with the Windows product key

If you're reinstalling Windows, you'll need to know the product key in order to complete the setup routine. Open the Registry Editor and browse to: 'HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE\Software\Microsoft\Windows\CurrentVersion\ProductKey'. You'll find the code hidden in there.

30 Hidden startup settings

TIP Want to know what happens when Windows starts up? Like, why it always seems to take so darn long? Hit the 'Start' button and select 'Run'. Now type 'msconfig' and press 'Enter'. The System Configuration Utility runs, giving point and click access to all of the applications and drivers that hog processor time at system startup. Everything is covered, from AUTOEXEC.BAT through to the Startup folder. And not a lot of people know that. ☑



TIP 30: hugely useful, but Microsoft keeps it hidden. Typical.

WINDOWS TUNE-UP

A common problem in Windows 98 is that it'll stop dead for minutes at a time while the disk wizzes and grinds like a food mixer. There are a number of things you can do to give your PC a speed boost, prevent the annoying pauses and stop your disk thrashing.

1 Add more RAM

One of the best performance tips, and one way to guarantee less disk thrashing, is to add more memory. The minimum these days is 32Mb but it's hideously slow; ideally you need at least 64Mb. Modern systems with modern applications and modern games really need 128Mb, so if you're buying a new system don't settle for anything less. If the vendor charges you too much for the upgrade, shop around and you should be able to get them as low as £1 per megabyte. Plus they're a doddle to install.

2 Sort out your virtual cache

Open up your 'SYSTEM.INI' file in your 'C:\Windows' folder. Make the following changes to your vcache section (add it if it's not already there):

```
[vcache]
MinFileCache=16384
MaxFileCache=16384
```

The number should be exactly one quarter of your total memory – the above settings are for a system with 64Mb installed. This prevents Windows from gobbling your RAM.

3 Limit the size of your swap file

Hold down 'Alt' and double-click on the 'My Computer' icon. Click the 'Performance' tab and then press the 'Virtual Memory' button. Select 'Let me specify my own virtual memory settings'. Here you'll need to specify a value that's identical for both the 'Minimum' and 'Maximum' (this prevents Windows from wasting effort resizing the file). We'd recommend a value twice the size of your RAM – so if you have 64Mb installed, enter '128'. Press 'OK' and then restart your machine when prompted.

4 Defrag your swap file

With a constant swap file size, you won't have to worry about defragging it as Windows won't ever be altering its size. That said, it will need to be defragged in the first place – and now is as good a time as any. Hold down 'Alt' and double-click the 'C' drive icon. Select the 'Tools' tab and press the 'Defragment Now' button at the bottom.

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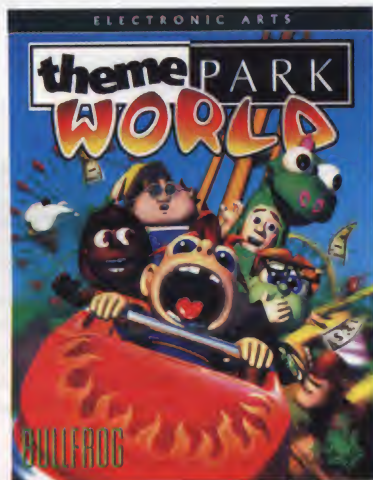
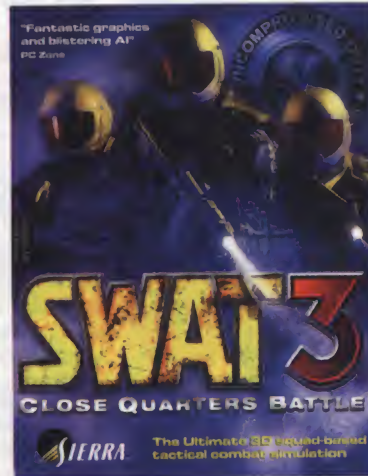
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NOTHING BUT TROUBLE

★ MAN WITH PROBLEMS Mark Hill



I hope you appreciate this. Every month we spend days, and many nights, playing games with a notepad in hand painstakingly writing down every corner you have to turn, every door you have to open and every object you have to pick up. You think it sounds like fun? Try it and see. Then you can stab yourself repeatedly in the eye with a toothpick, just for a bit of light relief. This month we've got pages and pages on *Thief II: The Metal Age* (and that's just the first part), plus some tips on *Star Trek: Armada*. I'd tell you what's on the way next month, but I think the excitement would kill me. In the meantime, enjoy all the cheats and answers to all your technical queries and industry complaints. Anyone got a toothpick?

IN TRUBS THIS MONTH...

116 CHEAT MASTER

When in doubt, you may as well just cheat. The master, Keith Pullin, shows you the way.

117 DEAR KEITH

Are you throwing your keyboard at the wall, tearing your hair out and generally just driving yourself insane with a gaming problem? Then turn to Uncle Keith for some top tips.

118 STAR TREK: ARMADA

Are you more of a Mr Magoo than a Mr Spock? Fear not, our collection of starfleet strategies will have you creaming Klingons and blasting Borgs quicker than you can say, 'Beam me up, Scotty.'

120 THIEF II: THE METAL AGE

In this month's super walkthrough you can get ready to sneak and steal your way through the maze that is *Thief II*.

128 DEAR WANDY

Need to find a solution to a niggling technical pain? Our resident techie Wandy is here to help.

130 WATCHDOG

If you're having troubles dealing with a pesky PC company and can't get any answers, then let the consumers' champion Adam Phillips guide you through your legal rights...

YOUR HOSTS



Adam Phillips



Keith Pullin



Martin Korda

CHEAT MASTER

All the latest PC cheats at your fingertips...

★ CHEATMEISTER Keith Pullin

ON THE CD



More cheats, tips and solutions on the cover CD this month. Find out what's in store by looking at the Editorial section of your CD-ROM browser.

NEED HELP?

If your problems persist, you can solve them if you...

WRITE TO Dear Keith/Cheat Master, PC ZONE, Dennis Publishing, 19 Bolsover Street, London W1P 7HJ

EMAIL letters.pczone@dennis.co.uk with Dear Keith or Cheat Master in the subject line.

MESSIAH

Interplay

Some of the following codes allow you to become other characters, whereas some give you weapons or activate special cheats. It's up to you to experiment to find out which combination of codes suits your style of play. To activate them simply press 'Esc' during the game and type:

Icantsee	AI vision off
Icanseeu	AI vision on
braindead	AI off
Einstein	AI on
Mynightmare	Armoured behemoth
Bestfriend	Barmon
Bigbang	Bazooka
Onsteroids	Behemoth
Letmein	Bouncer
Buzzbuzz	Buzzsaw
Keepmecompny	Companion bot
Charwireoff	Character wireframe off
Charwireon	Character wireframe on
Smellyguy	Chot 1
Nohygiene	Chot 2
Idontdance	Chot 3
Scumbucket	Chot 4
Smellysteroids	Chot behemoth
Chotling	Chot dwarf

Mixalot	DJ
Bustamove	Dancer 1
Cutarug	Dancer 2
Incharge	Domina
Toohardforme	End game
Janeplain	Female dweller 1
Jillplain	Female dweller 2
Lightneup	Flamethrower
Freezecam	Freeze camera
Fungirl	Fungirl
Ucantkillme	God mode on (Bob only)
Fleshnblood	God mode off
Getsome	Grenades
Guncmndr	Gun commander
Stickaround	Harpoon gun
Hcop	Heavy cop
Specialguy	Hung
Lcop	Light cop
Rapidfire	Machine gun
Slicendice	Maimer
Averagejoe	Male dweller 1
Averagejack	Male dweller 2
Averagejohn	Male dweller 3
Coolfx	Maser
Heydoc	Medic
Mcop	Medium cop
Addedfirepower	Offensive bot
Cooloff	Pak gun
Tophat	Pimp daddy
Offpolycount	Polycount off
Onpolycount	Polycount on
Workit	Prost 1
Mansdream	Prost 2
Boomstick	Pumpgun
Glowstick	Radiation worker
Varmint	Rat
Rcop	Riot cop
Egghead	Scientist
Femfatale	Sub Girl 1
Nastyone	Sub Girl 2
Thawcam	Thaw camera
Bringmeadrink	Waitress
Illbeback	Weapon ammo
Cantseemyface	Welder
Weldme	Welding Torch
Workinman	Worker

SOLDIER OF FORTUNE

Activision

Stick with us on this one, it might seem complicated at first, but it's actually not that bad:

First, right-click on 'sof.exe' in the game's main directory and create a shortcut. Right-click on the shortcut you've just created and choose 'Properties'. Add '+set console 1' to the command line so that it reads: 'C:\...\SOF\sof.exe' +set console 1'

Boot up the game with this shortcut and press '~' while playing to activate the console. You can now enter any of the following cheats one at a time:

Heretic	God mode
Phantom	Walkthrough-wall mode
Ninja	Invisible to enemies
Defaultweapons	Default weapons
Elbow	Armed with weapons 1-5
Bigelbow	Armed with weapons 6-10
matrix X	Timescale (where X is 1-10)
gimme X	Spawn object X (Before typing this, type: 'DEVELOPER 1' in the console, then 'ENTLIST' to see the objects you can choose from.)
updateinvfinal	More ammo
killallmonsters	Kill all
map X	Skip to level X (levels are: tut1, tsr1, tsr2, tm1, arm1, arm2, arm3, kos1, kos2, kos3, sib1, sib2, sib3, irq1a, irq1b, irq2a, irq2b, irq3a, irq3b, ger1, ger2, ger3, ger4, nyc1, nyc2, nyc3, sud1, sud2, sud3, jpn1, jpn2, jpn3)

STAR WARS: FORCE COMMANDER

Activision

Here are a few of the more unorthodox ways to stop the Empire totally ruining your galaxy:

For unlimited command points create a new player

called 'TheGalaxyIsYours' on the select player screen. Double-click on the name instead of pressing the blue arrow. Now, during the game, press 'M' for an extra 500 command points per press.

To access all the available missions create a player called 'TheWorldIsYours' on the select player screen. Again, double-click to begin the game and choose any of the missions.

Alternatively, press these keys after the 'TheGalaxyIsYours' cheat is activated:

Shift and M 500 Command Points and order any unit
Ctrl and 9 Remove fog of war
Ctrl and W Complete mission
Ctrl and 8 Show all the active units
Ctrl, Shift and 8 Show all units

THE SIMS

Electronic Arts

We printed a guide and cheats last month. Since then we've discovered a few more handy little secrets you might be interested in:

Buy the 30 simolian trashcan, order your Sim to empty it, then cancel the order just as they're removing the bag from the bin. This makes a bit of a mess unfortunately – but never fear. Get them to pick up the mess and put it back into a now mysteriously empty bin. Repeat this every time your bin is full so you never have to take your rubbish out again.

Leave your bills unpaid until the next lot of bills arrive. When they turn up, pay the original bills and the new bills in the mailbox should disappear without having to be paid.

Create a family with a male and female of the same star sign.

Move them into a house and get some serious snogging in – well, at least make them kiss ten times. Their relationship meter should rocket to a massive 100. If they keep kissing the female should ask to have a baby. How sweet.

ROLLCAGE: STAGE 2

Take 2 Interactive

Type in these codes at the bonus awards screen:

Mynameisneo Access all campaigns
Mynameismrsmith All campaigns except for final
Wreckedonspeed All game modes except for soccer
Warpspeedmrsulu All circuits
Metropolis All cars
Inversion Mirror mode

THIEF II: THE METAL AGE

Eidos

If this month's walkthrough

doesn't do the trick, then hopefully these cheats will:

To start the game with loads of cash, edit the 'dark.cfg' file and add the line 'cash_bonus x' where 'x' is amount.

To skip to the next mission press 'Ctrl, Alt, Shift and End'.

REVENANT

Eidos

Again, we've printed some codes for this before, but here's some newbies you might want to try. Just hit 'Enter' while playing and type away, warrior:

Noamnesia Take character up to level 30
Abracadabra Infinite mana and all talismans
Gimmesomegrub Gives five of each food type
Dummies Turn off monster AI
Debug Hit [F12] for in-game Editor

PHONE FOR HELP

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DEAR KEITH

Are you hurting real bad? Keith Pullin cures your gaming wounds

LONG HAUL

Q I'm at the start of chapter two in *The Longest Journey* and I haven't got a bloody clue what to do. I've wandered around everywhere, found a key on the subway (that I can't reach), gone to the cinema (but can't get in) and basically I'm totally stumped. What? Where? How? Why?

Laurie Brown, Ipswich

A Look out your bedroom window to find a clothesline, rubber ducky and chain. Use the bread on the rubber ducky and a bird appears. When the rubber ducky floats away use the chains to haul up the clothesline. Now go to the café to find the deflated rubber ducky. Use the clamp, clothesline and rubber ducky together in the subway to pick up the key. Use the key on the fuse box outside the cinema to get in.

BIG FREEZE

Q I've got a bit of a problem with *Revenant*. I'm trying to kill Soullage, but he keeps kicking my arse large style. I've been at it for days, but he's just too hard. How do I deck this guy? Is it true that I need to find some arrows or something?

George Sullivan, Bristol

A Ice arrows are what you need George boy. After you enter Soullage's cage there's a chest to the right that has a longbow and 25 ice arrows in it. Hit him with one of these to freeze him. Now run up to him, hack away with your sword for a bit, back

off, and then ice him again. Keep doing this to kill him without being hit once.

EUROPEAN LAW

Q I've just got *UEFA Champions League 99/00* and for some reason my players are always being sent off. Why is this happening? Is there somehow I can make the refs a bit more lenient.

Ian Ashman, Poole

A The refs are a bit harsh. Fortunately, you can get round it by switching the ref option to 'blind'. Unfortunately, players get badly hurt in this mode. Still, if you can accept gritty lower league realism, instead of stylish European flair, you'll be fine.

IRATE PIRATE

Q I'm trying to work out how to play as the pirates in *Sid Meier's Alien Crossfire*. I can't really pinpoint their strong point and so my efforts at pilfering collapse after just a couple of years. What's the best tactic to use?

Martin Benson, email

A If you're playing as the pirates, nutrients and energy are the key. Make mineral production a priority at your bases, use tidal harnesses to increase energy production and build from there. Simple.

BIG GAY POSER

Q I've heard that you can race as Big Gay AI in *South Park Rally*. Is this really true? If so, can you please give me an idea of how I can do this because he is my favourite character

of them all (apart from Terence and Phillip, of course!).

Ox, email

A To race as Big Gay AI you have to win the Pink Lemonade race. I'd like to say it's more complicated than that – but it isn't. Are you sure you've got the hang of this?

GREEN FEES

Q It's absolutely impossible to putt in *Tiger Woods PGA Championship 2000*, sometimes the power meter doesn't even go up high enough. On top of this, I can't qualify for the PGA tour – I always finish about 50 over par. Curiously, most of the other competitors do too, except Tiger who always finishes about 50 shots ahead of everyone else. Am I doing something wrong or have I just been ripped-off?

Sarah Gregory, Liverpool

A You're doing something wrong. Just move the cursor further away from the hole to increase the range on the power scale. Generally speaking, putting is always a nightmare in golf games. You have to take everything into account including the speed of the green, wind, uphill or downhill lie and whether the slope is to the left or right. As for Tiger, he's just hot – what can we say?

JUMP TO IT

Q Can you please save my life? I have bought *Indiana Jones And The Infernal Machine* and no matter what I try I just can't get onto the radio bunker on the second level. I would really appreciate

it if you could tell me how to do this as I have been trying since Christmas.

George Anton, Manchester

A So many of you write in with this problem and it's not difficult. All you have to do is perform a running jump and then press up to grab hold of the ledge. You're going to need to know this little trick in plenty of places throughout the rest of the game too, so I'd get used to it now if I were you. Anyway, I really hope this saves your life...

BUNCH OF WHINGERS

Q I am currently playing *Championship Manager Season 99/00* and have come across a recurring problem. No matter whom I manage, most of my players are either turning up late for training, demanding transfers or hating me full stop. I am still unsure under what circumstances to fine players. I really need some of your help in solving these problems.

Martin Sargeson, West Sussex

A Generally you should only fine players if they are sent off for violent conduct during a match. Fining them for coming in late and being unfit annoys them even more. Instead, try giving them a stint in the reserves – this sorts out any whingers and also has the added bonus of getting them match fit again. Also, if your tactics don't match the coaches' tactics players get confused, or downright disheartened. So watch out for all those things and you should be fine.

STAR TREK: ARMADA

STRATEGY GUIDE

Armed with nothing more than his wits, *Mark Hill* ventured where a few other men had already been before. But at least he managed to come back from the final frontier with some tips

★ REVIEWED PCZ #90 SCORE 74%



It's always a good idea to have a second base going, in case of an emergency.



Being chased isn't a problem as long as you remember to use the blue nebula.



Make sure each ship has enough crew. If they don't, transport them to balance the fleet out.

Armada is far from being the perfect strategy game, but it's good Trekkie fun all the same. And a quick look at the Charts suggests that's more than enough to guarantee a hit. If you're having any trouble going boldly where no man has gone before to conquer the galaxy, here are a few tricks and tips for budding space cadets to heed or ignore at their leisure.

- ★ Don't group scout ships with artillery ones, set them to guard an artillery group. This way they will keep at the same pace as the group instead of racing ahead when you tell the group to attack a target, and getting destroyed before the big guns arrive. At the same time, you can make use of the scout's longer sensors, enabling your big ships to see and shoot further.
- ★ It's always a good idea to have two bases on the go, that way, if

your main one gets destroyed, everything is not lost. The best thing to do is send off a construction ship to a quiet area of space, build a couple of basics and start mining dilithium so as not to be a pull on the resources.

- ★ Don't make the mistake of keeping lots of newly created ships clogged up together in the same area; they could all be destroyed in one swift attack. Instead, keep them moving, never too far from one another,

in case they need to race to a particular hot spot.

★ Decommissioning ships, bases and other units can be a very smart thing to do when you're running low on resources. If, for example, you've already built all the ships you're going to need, you can get rid of the construction

yard. If you already have so much dilithium you don't know what to do with it, you can get rid of the mining facilities.

★ Wormholes are an ideal way to get to other parts of the map (and there are quite a few more of them than the *Star Trek* series seems to suggest there should



When you're running low on resources think nothing of decommissioning a few units.

STARFLEET CHEATS

No matter how many hints and tips we give, you lazy louts always resort to typing in cheats. And who can blame you?

To enable the following cheats all you have to do is press Enter during play and type in:

kobayashimaru	skips to the next mission
showmethemoney	gives you dilithium
canofwhoopass	gives you 99 additional officers
screwyouguysimgoinghome	boot list in multiplayer mode



Maximum dilithium, minimum effort.

The wormholes are perfect for surprise attacks and quick escapes.

Borg is the enemy you shouldn't be surprised to find one opening right next to your base. If this should happen, don't wait for them to start pouring out with their Dalek-like cries of "assimilate, assimilate".

Instead, send everything you've got through it. Suddenly, it's them dealing with a nasty surprise.

★ Another great special weapon is the Romulan Phoenix's rift creator, which causes an expanding tear in the space-time continuum, destroying anything that stands in its way.

Unfortunately, such a powerful unit is also very weak and susceptible to attacks. So, if you suffer one of these rifts you should hunt down the Phoenix and blow it up. If it's you who is messing about with space and time, make sure you've built adequate defences around it.

★ The more crew there are on a ship, the faster it will repair, so try to keep all your vessels' crews balanced. Transporting people from ship to ship is an effective way to do this. Don't forget that those red-shirted people are just another resource for you to use up, you heartless villain you. [PZ]



These scouts will never go racing ahead of the slower ships in the fleet — they're guarding them.

NEBULAE

Using nebulae wisely is the key to success in *Armada*. It's all too easy to forget what each of them does in the heat of battle, and to either avoid them in case they have negative effects or to simply barge through them without any regard for your ships' safety. Make sure you know what properties each nebula has and be sure to use them to your advantage

YELLOW NEBULAE



ⓘ A crewless ship is easy to destroy as it enters a yellow nebula.

These nebulae emit a strong radiation that kills the crew of any ship that enters. However, you can use the radiation to your advantage. The AI always seems to be on red alert, meaning they will attack any of your ships it sees and chase them until one or the other is destroyed. A good tactic, then, is to send a big vessel with a high number of crew to lure some smaller enemy ships after it. Once they're on your tail, you can fly through the yellow nebula losing only a fifth of your human resources while they lose their whole crew.

GREEN NEBULAE



ⓘ Like a weekend on a health farm. Only a lot greener.

As you can imagine from the environmentally friendly colour of this one, its effects are highly salubrious and beneficial. If your ship has been adversely affected by an enemy weapon, going through this nebula will restore all systems to normal. In addition, the rate at which your ship repairs itself and the shields recharge are speeded up. If you find one of these rare galactic oases try to set up camp next to it. At the very least, keep in mind where it's located and, when things start to go badly in battle, go there to restore your health.

RED NEBULAE



ⓘ It looks uncomfortable and, sure enough, you can expect it to blow up at any time.

Red. Don't go there. Simple as that. There's an electrical thunderstorm swimming about this nebula, waiting to strike shields, wearing them down until it can attack your hull. You could use it in the same way as the yellow radioactive nebula, only this time you will have to sacrifice your ship. It's worth it if you can get three or four ships chasing an unimportant unit of yours. The red nebulae is not quite as risky if you're playing as the Borg as you can take advantage of their higher shield regeneration rate.

PURPLE NEBULAE



ⓘ These ships are completely helpless. They're sitting ducks for an ambush.

Purple nebulae slow down ships and disable their shields and sensors. As a result, they're perfect locations for staging an ambush. The best way to take advantage of them is to get some enemy units to follow you and have lots of firepower assembled around the sides of the nebula. When the enemy ships enter, they won't be able to detect you and should fall apart in no time. Or, if you have Klingon commandos, you could overpower their crew and take the ships over.

BLUE NEBULAE



ⓘ No harm will come to these, unless they're boarded by Klingons or the Borg.

This is the closest thing there is in the game to a safe zone. In here, shields are disabled, but so are weapons. You can sit in a blue nebula for as long as you like and there's nothing that can harm you. It's a useful place to be if you have a ship that's about to be destroyed — you can hide it in here while you build reinforcements. You can also use blue nebulae to protect small, defenceless vessels against being chased by larger ships when you're trying to get to a particular point in the map.

HIGH FLYING DEATH DEFYING



THIEF II: THE METAL AGE

WALKTHROUGH — PART ONE

Martin Korda dons his hooded cloak to lead you (stealthily, of course) through the first half of the mysterious *Thief II: The Metal Age*

★ REVIEWED PCZ #87 SCORE 82%

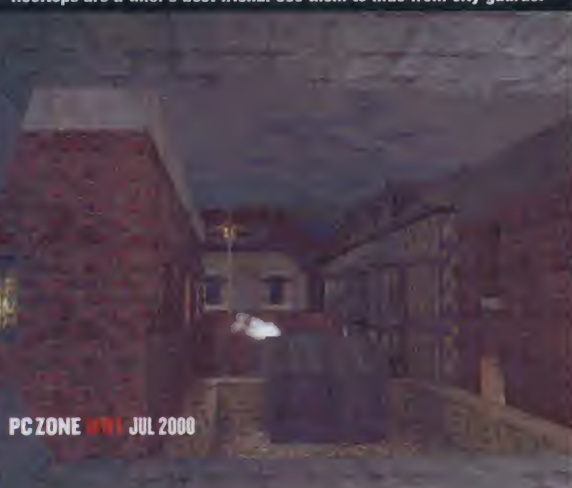


During the first mission, your map is an invaluable guide.



Find the rope arrow in the second mission, Shipping And Receiving.

Rooftops are a thief's best friend. Use them to hide from city guards.



RUNNING INTERFERENCE

The side door has been unlocked for you. Head in the route shown on your map. Go through the door and take the coins on the table. Go north to the next room. Outside the door on the left is a key on a ledge. Stay hidden from the guards and extinguish the torch near to them. Knock out the guards. Open the right-hand door, extinguish the light and go through the left door near the guards. Steal their possessions. Take what's on the shelf. Under the shelf on the other side of the room from the door, you'll find a switch. Take everything you find in the secret compartment.

Go into the room with the guards, blind them with a flashbomb and knock them out.

Go through to the room with a fireplace and then into the hall beyond. Knock out the guard you find in there and put him in the steam room. Using your map, head for the kitchen. Open the door and hide in the shadows created by the pillars. Knock out the guard, putting the body in the storage room. Inspect the wine rack and take what is there. Exit the cellar and head down the north hallway. Get into the dumbwaiter, turn to face its entrance and use the switch to activate it.

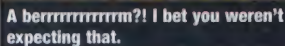
Steal everything the guard has, then go back down. Go to the kitchen. Snuff out the torch, then go in. Knock out the guard and dispose of the body. Go to the end of the hallway and move past Jenni's door. Go up the stairs to

the second floor. There's a guard near the stairs, who you must knock out. Put the body in the shadows and go north. In the music room, steal everything you can. At the south side of the hall nearby is a steel door. Use the key you stole earlier to unlock it. Go to the third floor, disposing of the guard as you go. Steal his key. Head through the west door when you get to the third floor. Now, go into the bedroom and activate the switch underneath the table. Get the key.

Go back to the second floor. Walk across the large hall to get to the double doors. Unlock them with the key you found upstairs. Wait until the guards pass by, go onto the balcony and attract their attention. Run inside, and throw a flashbomb at the guards. Knock



The third mission, Framed, might trip you up if you cross the fine line between stealth and haste too often.



them both out, steal their keys and hide them. Head for the west ramp and knock out the guard nearby. Take his key and stash his body.

Go to the east wing of the second floor. Open the second door here and extinguish any lights. Wait in there until the guard wanders by, then clout him one. Head for the hall in front of the first floor stairs and knock out the guard there. Look into all the rooms in the wing and steal whatever you can. South of here are some stairs which take you to the third floor again, so steal everything up there too. When you're done, go back to Basso and follow him to complete the mission.

SHIPPING AND RECEIVING

You're on a crate. Get off it and head south. Find the gap in the crates and go through it. You should be able to see a door to a warehouse with a number on it. You can open the left-hand crate. Near the warehouse is a shed. Go in and look at the number pad. Putting in the numbers of corresponding warehouses will open them.

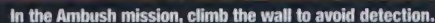
Head west and take out the guards. Head for the stairwell of the first building and knock out the guard. Knock out the archers



if you get the opportunity as well. Go to the second floor. There's a key in the office. There are two doors nearby with guards next to them. Knock them both out and hide their bodies. Go left, walk past the metal door to the wooden one. Go through it and into Vice President Rampone's office. Knock out the President. Steal whatever you find here, then leave. Go round the corner to the mail room. Take the money in the cash box. Go through the door next to this room. You can use this keypad to unlock the warehouse doors if you like.

Bay 7732: Pick up the label on the desk. **Bay 6937:** Behind the

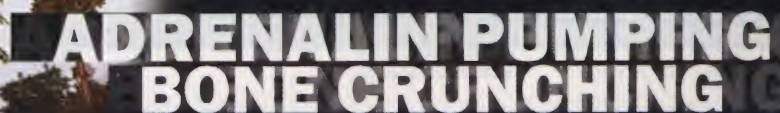
counter on the shelves is loads of loot. Under the counter is a cash box. Fire an arrow into the eye of the painting with the relevant passage. Take the money from the safe. **Bay 0928:** The highest and lowest shelves have crystals which you must take. **Bay 0266:** There's money on the table and swanky candle sticks in the right corner. **Bay 7933:** Put the label you found earlier onto the large box near the door. Inspect the diary on the table. Then look behind the tapestry. Get on the lift, and go up. On the shelves are some gold plates for you to nick. **Bay 5188:**



There's an expensive silver canister here. **Bay 6013:** Go up the left lift to find a crystal. **Bay 0457:** Inspect the metal man. On the shelf are some crystals. There's also a small crate to be inspected here. Go up the stairs until you come out on the roof. Turn right so that you're facing the skylight, which is open. Go down the ladder and head south, pausing at the metal door. Go into another warehouse, find the

wooden door and go in. Check out the table for things to steal.

Go to the other steel door. Open the door with the lever and walk out and look west. Follow the catwalk to the second building. Open the door you come to and head west down the hallway. You should now be at some stairs. Head up the stairs and knock out the guard you come across. Go to President Rampone's office. Inspect the



bookcase and find a trigger mechanism. Steal everything you find. Now head out of this room and go back to the lift. Head for the second floor. Knock out the guard, steal his key and hide the body. Walk through the southwest door and then through the steel one. To the south should be a skylight.

Look around to see the smugglers. Smash the skylight open. Using a moss arrow to cushion your fall, jump onto the crate below. Get onto the chests and wait. Use your lock picks to open the chest and get the rope with an arrow on it. Leave by using the orange door.

When approaching the docks, locate the guards and knock them out. Then hide them in the shadows. Follow the smugglers you saw earlier, when they go into the warehouse, knock them both

out. Hide them and take the key that one of them has. Now go to Davidson's office and use this key to get into the crate that's in there.

Go to the ship and hug its sides, while keeping low. Snuff out all lights on and near the dock. Creep up behind the guard on the ship, knock him out and rob him of his possessions. Check out the crate nearby as well. Go to the Captain's quarters. Steal everything you find in this room. Now leave the ship. If you've found enough spice to complete the mission, go back to where you started the mission and climb up the crates to end the level.

FRAMED

Make sure you stock up on plenty of invisibility potions, water and moss arrows before you start. You're outside in a square, and if you want some loot, rob the

Officer's Club to the west. Now search the bins near the tavern. Go to the house with the metal door, pick its lock and go in. Inspect the hatch on the left-hand side of the room. Open it with the switch in the north of the room, and then get into it, and start swimming east. Surface near the pipe to catch your breath, then head north. Open the drain you come across and swim into it, then north up another pipe. When you get to the next tank, go west. Head north through another pipe and then keep going north.

You should now be in a pool. Swim away from the spider, get out of the pool and go through the opening in the rock, which has a torch either side of it. Search the two pools that you come across, then walk over the planks. The extinguished torch will open a secret door. Use another lever to

close the door, then go up the stairs. Keep going until you come to a door in the east wall. Snuff out all the lights and open the door while crouching. Head south once the guard has passed.

Move south. Duck down as you go past the room with the complaining woman, and then go through the south door. Look at the note on the table. Check the water cooler next to the table. Walk to the metal desk, and use the lever to deactivate the alarm system. Look under the table and press the button you see. Take everything from the secret compartment that opens.

Go to the basement, returning to the pool you entered through. Go through the opening of the tunnel with two flares, picking them up as you go. When the tunnel divides, go east. Use the switch near you, and a secret

door will open. Go through it and close it behind you. Head through the east door. Put out the lights and then go up the stairs. Steal as much money as you can find up here. After going down the east steps, go up the stairs to the north. Put out all the lights as you move. To the east stands a guard, who you must steal a key from. Do this by snuffing out the light near to him. Hide and wait till the patrolling guards move away from you. Follow the one who's going west and duck into the third door to the north, which leads to the target range.

Aim an arrow for the bullseye of the right target to open a secret door. Take whatever you find through it. Press the button next to the metal door and head through the opening. Follow the guard walking south. Activate the lever on the east wall. Go



through the secret door and use the ladder to get to another hallway. Click on the left hand switch to get into the next room. Find the secret opening by inspecting the bookshelf.

Go north, and when you get to a hallway, go through the door to the stairs. Go through the west door and smash open the door to Mosely's quarters. Read the book on the table. Go back to the first floor.

Follow the southeast wall when you come out of the secret passage. Throw the switch on the pillar. Go through the secret door that it opens. Search all of the lockers. Go out the west door. Search the chests, then leave through the west door. Stop off at the toilets, then go through the door north of them. Put out the lights, then go through the western double doors. Extinguish the lights in the courtyard and go through the double doors. Head south and go through the door. Search the room, go out the west door and walk to the training room.

Pull the scone. Fire the rope with an arrow on it at the balcony, climb up and go through the secret passage. Find a switch

then head through the next secret passage. Put out the fire and go in. Search the room and open the locked door with your picks. Follow the guard who walks north after putting out the lights. Go to Lieutenant Moseley's office and search the bin. Go to Lieutenant Hagen's office and pick up the handkerchief. Go towards Truart's office, and down the east/west hall. Go to the Warden's room. Check the bookshelves then climb to the third floor. Get the key off the guard. Follow the hallway and use invisibility potions to get past the electric eye. Follow the rooms north. Unlock the vault door and go in. Use the numbers you learnt earlier to get into the vault, drop the evidence you picked up. Go to the little courtyard on the first floor, hit the switch on the south wall and leg it.

AMBUSH

Go up the stairs, run west and into the north street. Jump for the wall, pull yourself into the garden. Open the metal door to the north. Turn off the lights outside, then go out of the window for the darkness you've created. Leave the market by the southwest exit. Climb into the manhole cover →



Avoid mechrombots at all costs.



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Remember, different types of arrow will arc differently when fired.



A novelty bow, with an add-on picture frame. How nice.



You need that key. Time for him to have a sleep I think.

← that you come across. Follow the passage into a channel. Get into the water and swim. Leave the water at the lamp post. Go down the alley which heads west. Then go north until you get back to your house. Run north then east to get to the alley behind your house. Find the wooden double doors in a nearby building and go in, closing them behind you. Put out the lights and go upstairs. Find the room which looks onto your house. Jump over to your house, pick up your possessions, then jump back. Now go back the way you came,

so that you're back at the manhole cover. Go to the market and walk east.

When you get there, go through the wooden door in the east wall. Unlock the metal door, go up the stairs and steal the key on the table. Leave, head north and then east at the first opportunity. You should come to another manhole cover. Extinguish the lights nearby, then unlock the door with the key you just found. Follow the tunnel north, making sure to be particularly quiet as you go. When the three guards move, go north to the wooden door. Unlock it and head upstairs.

Look out of the window, moss the scaffolding and drop down. When the patrolling guards move off, moss the ground and jump down. Go to the building north of you and pick the lock off the metal door. Go in and snuff out the light. Take the food you find. Open the shutters, and if the guards have gone, climb out of the window. Run north and then west until you arrive at Shalebridge Gate. Unlock the gate to complete the mission.

EAVESDROPPING

You are in front of the Mechanist's seminary. Run east. When you get to the path, go south and through the metal door in the south wall. Go west and take out the lights. Now wait for the guard to pass by you, and clout him one. Get close to the room's northeast door and listen closely to what Karras says in regards to where the key can be found, and then go and get it.

After you've got it, return to the door you eavesdropped at. To the south of this room are some

stairs. Use them, dragging the unconscious guard behind you. Get rid of the guard in some shadows and keep following the stairs down, taking any valuables you find. Walk through the doorway with the lanterns above it. Crouch down and go through the tunnel heading north. Again, pick up any items of worth you come across. At the guard room, go up the stairs. Use the east door.

Go out of this room through the southeast door. Walk west, then north until you get to a ladder, which you must use. Knock out the guard, then look into the storage shed on the roof. Go to the southwest and take the goblet. To the west is the entrance to the temple. Open it, wait till the guard passes you, then knock her out. Use the ladder to head up, because there's plenty of loot to be found in the chests there.

Go to the tower by using the doors on the second floor. Go to the east tower first. After opening the door to the east tower, stay still and listen. Hide in the shadows while the two guards talk. When they stop talking, knock both of them out. Steal all the valuables in the room. Go back to the archway where you eavesdropped earlier and go down. Extinguish the lights. Hide under the stairs until the guards finish chatting, and move on. Go into the room they were just in and put out the lights. Open the door which has the hammers on it with your picks.

Once in the catacombs, use your flashbombs to take out the ghosts, and collect as much treasure and gold as you can find. Make a copy of the key you found



Warehouses are excellent to rob, as they're often full of gold and jewellery.



Wait for both guards to walk away from you, then follow one silently and clout him when it's safe.

Steer clear of this pesky fellow.

earlier, by going to the workroom, which is in the north section of the catacombs. Push the safety deposit key into the wax. Make sure you avoid the robot that's walking around, so as not to attract attention to your presence. Check out what's behind the steel door to the northeast of the entrance (pick it open) through which you first entered the complex, before

making a run for it and completing the mission.

FIRST CITY BANK AND TRUST

You're near the bank. Go west and follow the north wall. Go past the barrel and the wagon. Follow the three guards when they appear. Go to the stone shed and use the ladder you find there to go down. Head east and climb up the next

ladder you come across. Now walk east. There should be a guard in front of the door. Using the alcove to get behind him, knock him out. Go through the door behind him. Go

up the stairs. Snuff out the light to the south. Walk around the stairwell and wander east. Find the metal door and put out the torch near it. Open the door, lean in and shoot out the light. Work out the electric eye's pattern and then sneak past it, closing the door behind you. Inspect everything on the desk

and then head back to the stairs on the first floor.

Go down to the steel door and go in. Go round the sides of the room to the other door, to avoid the electric eye. Pick the lock of the chest in this room. Go through the south door. Knock out the nearby guard and hide the body. Go east and open the door into the adjacent room with a large staircase in it. Put out the



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"I'm sure you went this way..."



"...come on he's around here somewhere."



"They'll never find me in here."

lantern. Go through the door on the other side of the room. Put out the light at the base of the stairs. Run under the electric eye before it detects you. Go through the door and inspect the desk. Open the door to the basement and head down.

Go to the room full of crates. Take out the guard. Find the sign on the wall and go north through the first door you come across. Go north after navigating the tunnels. Use moss arrows on the metal floor, go across, then head southwest. Find another sign and go down the tunnel next to it. Throw a mine towards the mech-guard and watch it blow itself up. Get past the electric eye by sticking to the sides of the room and shadows. Throw the switch in front of the barred door. Hide while the door opens, then run through.

Check out the east side of the boiler and open up the panel you find there. Activate the switch. Go

back to the room which takes you to the basement and head to the third floor, taking out any guards you come across as you go. At the top, throw a flashbomb at the archer, knock him out and stash the body. Stick to the shadows and head across the chamber, then follow the passage, putting out lights as you go. The key from the basement guard should open the double doors. Inside, find the switch that turns off an electric eye. Go back to the first floor via the stairwell.

To the south is a steel door. Go through and follow the hallway south. Go into the courtyard. Run past the electric eye in the next room you come to. Go out via the west door after stealing all the gold you find in the room. Go to the lobby and hide in a doorway's shadows. Go west, down the stairs and steal the light and whatever you find in the chest.

Run past the electric eye in the north room. Get yourself to the

northwest part of the room. Go up the ramp, extinguish the light and open the steel door to the west. Head south, knock out the guard and lock pick the metal door. Go back to the ramp and go north to the vault. After disposing of the guard, go to the metal door under the ramp which leads to the second floor. The button here will switch off the electric eye near the vault, making it safe to go in. Take the lift to the second floor. Go past the electric eye and use the ladder to go up. Open the box and find the wax cylinder machine. Go south and out of the bank to complete the mission.

BLACKMAIL

Get over the wall and look through the gap. Head east until you come to a gap in the wall, where you must hide. Take out the torches near the chapel. Knock out the sleeping man. Go east of the chapel and activate a switch near the wooden door. Head south until

you reach a gate. Open it, knock out and hide the guard and take the key. Go to the back of the house and through the door there. Knock out the guards, take their keys and leave through the east door. Pick the chests, steal what's in them and then knock out the guard. Walk down the hall and take the first door to the north. Pick open the next door. Find the torch that moves and open a secret compartment.

Go back to the main hallway. Go west and take out the guards. Extinguish the fire in the fireplace and take the arrow. Take the gold on the table, then walk west to the kitchen. Knock out the servant and take his key. Steal whatever you can from the kitchen. Go to the ballroom, knock out the sleeping man and then go to the door which requires a gear key. Unlock this door. Knock out the guard and take his key. Go up the stairs, put out the lights and go to the

hallway to the east. Unlock the door, go in, check the note on the table and open the secret door with the book on the bookshelf. Steal whatever you can find in the chest.

To the south is a guard, knock him out and take his key. Go south down the hall. Go into all the rooms you come across and steal whatever you find. After this, head for the game room. Listen carefully, and then steal the gold on the table. Leave through the door to the east. Go into the room at the other side of the game room. Steal Benny's gold after he has stopped talking. Knock out the guard.

Go north down the hall. Get past the electric eye and jump into the northern pool. At the bottom is a silver key. Leave the room the same way you came in and go north. At the intersection, open the west door carefully and run into the room when the electric eye is not pointing at you. Get the arrows, then hide in the shadows. Use a fire arrow to take out the electric eye. Go north. Put the silver gear into the gear machine and head into the hall. After turning the corner, put out the torch. Now walk south and listen carefully. Knock out the guards and take the gold key that one of them is carrying. Hide the bodies.

Go to the third floor and head east. Go in through the double doors. Open the balcony doors and inspect the site of the murder. Return to the second floor. Use the gold key to open the door to the second floor hall. Use the stairs to descend and then go east. Unlock the west door. Cut open the tapestry and head through the gap. Follow the passage and go out of the main door. If you've fulfilled all of the objectives, then you've finished the mission. That concludes the first half walkthrough. Next month, we'll tackle the second part of this excellent game. See you then... [X]



If you need to distract the guards, use a noise arrow.

let the games begin

Playing on the gameplay.com site costs nothing. It's fun and it's easy to get started. We'll give you all the help you need to get to the widest range of games and clubs on the web.

meet new enemies

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you'll be back

Gameplay.com is the site you'll want to come back to again and again. It's easy to connect to the UK's best online games community, and it's great fun. Get into gameplay.com, now. And prepare to do battle.



gameplay

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There is no charge for playing games on the gameplay.com website, however you will be responsible for call charges (from 1p per minute)

www.gameplay.com/wireplay

DEAR WANDY

Tips on getting more oomph from your games without wringing your wallet, plus some common dial-up anomalies and a wacky Athlon

★ ON CALL Phil Wand

COME IN, SIT DOWN

Send us a query or a top tip and you could pocket £50.

Share your techie or gaming-related problems with us, and we, in turn, may well share it with thousands of readers via these very pages in a big communal love-in type of thing. And as an extra incentive, every single month we offer a cool £50 to the reader who sends in the most interesting query or toppest tip. No, really. Send in as much relevant information as you can.

WRITE TO Dear Wandy,
PC ZONE, 19 Bolsover Street,
London W1P 7HJ

EMAIL Address your letters to us at
letters.pczone@dennis.co.uk with
the subject heading *Dear Wandy*.

Please note: while we can assure you that we read every techie query sent to us, we are unable to offer personal replies. Also, please do not phone, as you're unlikely to reach someone who can help. Thanks.

“I want to upgrade my machine to something a bit more capable of running the latest games. I'm on a budget (anything less than £250) and I'd like something that runs at about 500-600MHz”

MIKE GREEN,
ON LOOKING FOR LOW-COST SPEED

BARGAIN BRAWN PART ONE

Q I wonder if you can give me an idea of the best way to go with my ageing PC. I have a Cyrix 200MHz machine with 80Mb RAM and a Maxi Gamer 3dxf card. I can get a Voodoo3 2000 card for £70 odd, but I could probably get a second-hand Pentium II motherboard for that price. Would I be better off upgrading the motherboard rather than the graphics card? I have heard that Cyrix chips have crappy co-processors. I suspect that slow games have as much to do with dodgy programming as they do with stretching the hardware, as recent games such as *Trick Style* and *Official Formula 1* both look great and run really smoothly. However, games such as *Driver* are totally unplayable.

Steve Waldron

A It really depends on how much you want to spend. You *do* need a faster processor, which will almost certainly require a new motherboard. You're right about the Cyrix co-processor, the floating point maths is very backward (the AMD chips have a much better floating point, with the Athlon rated faster than any Intel equivalent). You then need to bin your current video card and update that too, then tip in a bit more memory – remembering of course that it needs to be rated at 100MHz or the new motherboard will reject it.

Let's look at the cheapest way of doing this. We'll steer well clear of the Pentium II/III, as the processors and motherboards cost far too much. Go for a Gigabyte GA-5AA (AT Super Socket 7) motherboard or a GA-5AX (ATX Super Socket 7) depending on your choice of case. This will set you back around £60. Next, an AMD K6-2-450 processor, yours for just £40. As I said, you may need faster memory, and £50 will get you 64Mb of PC100 SDRAM. So that's a brand new 450MHz

beefcake with 64Mb for just £150. If you still have some money in the kitty, then £70 and a bit of searching will get you a Voodoo 3 2000.

BARGAIN BRAWN PART TWO

Q I want to upgrade my current machine to something a bit more capable of running the latest games. I'm on a bit of a budget (anything less than £250) and I'd like something that runs at about 500-600MHz. What can you recommend that's good value for money? I currently have a PII 266 with 64Mb RAM.

Mike Green

A The PII 266 runs on a 66MHz bus, which means unless the motherboard you have is switchable and your memory is zippy, you are going to have problems running any of the faster Pentium chips as they all require a 100MHz bus.

The old Celeron chips used to fit the Slot 1 and ran on a 66MHz bus, but now Intel has given up on them and has gone back to sockets rather than slots. So you *could* buy a Socket 370 (what the Celerons need) to Slot 1 (what you have) converter that would allow you to use a fast Celeron chip. The only other alternative is to ditch the motherboard and try something new. You could go

for a Super Socket 7 board with one of the later AMD K6 chips, but that will depend on you having 100MHz RAM in your existing setup. You could go for a Socket 370 board and a Celeron, but check that it doesn't need 100MHz memory – it shouldn't, but be aware of potential problems.

You don't say what video card you have, so you may want to upgrade that in the price too, which is probably going to make things very tight – a lower specification Voodoo3 or TNT2 will be about £70.

TOO FAST

Q I've just been reading the April 2000 issue, and I couldn't help noticing the modem problem page. I have a query about my modem: I'm connected to ClaraNet and BT Free, and I connect at 115,200bps. Everybody else I know on the Net connects at anything from 33,333 to 46,667bps – so why am I able to connect at 115,200? I have checked my settings and nothing seems out of the ordinary. My modem is a Rockwell 56.

Paul

A Bad news Paul: you ain't connecting at that speed! 115,200 is the speed at which your PC is talking to the modem, *not* the speed at which the modem is squawking down the phone line. That aside, the V.90 standard only supports a data rate of 56,000bps, so any numbers you see above that are wrong. It's not the true

connection speed and is usually down to old or incorrect drivers, or driver settings.

WHICH PATCH?

Q I have *Half-Life* version 1.0.0.8. Do I need patches beginning 1.0.0.8 or 1.0.0.9? I can't get the patches on the PCZ #85 cover CD to work, and Sierra's Auto Update program tells me there are no patches available. I need *Team Fortress Classic* for some of the home-brew levels on the Net and I don't want to have to download that as well if I can nab it from a disc.

David Cowie

A You should be using patches starting 1.0.0.8. Recently there have been lots of reports of *Half-Life* getting rather confused about what version it is. We've seen it ourselves a number of times where we'd had *Team Fortress Classic* installed, but only the 1.0.0.5 to 1.0.1.5 patch would upgrade it. Don't ask us why. We then used the 1.0.1.5 to 1.0.1.6 patch to update it to the current version – and it worked. Give the 10051015.exe patch a try. If that doesn't work then the best bet would be to remove and reinstall *Half-Life* and try again.

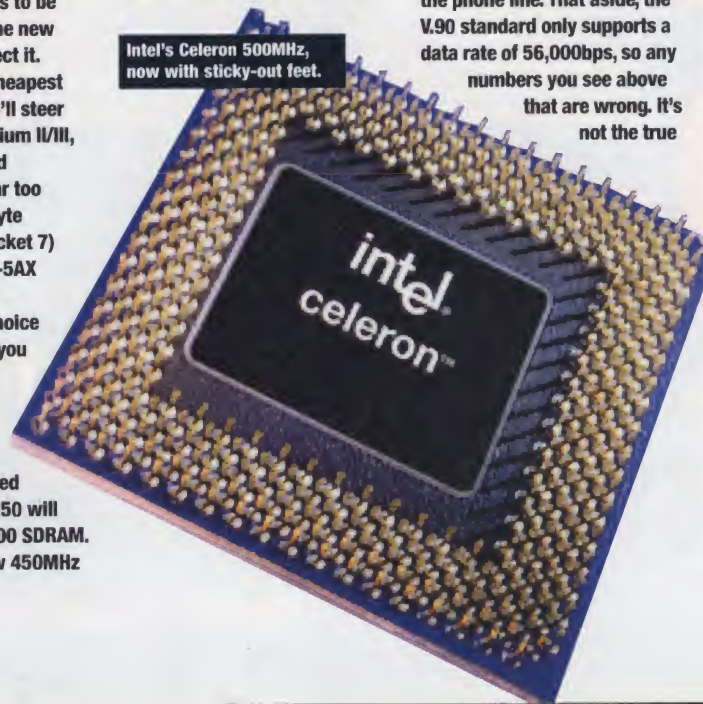
If you still have trouble after that, you may have the old CIH virus which is going round faster than flu at the office Christmas party (thanks to all those who emailed us about this – the CIH virus, that is, not the flu). There is a program available that removes it, available from www.pspl.com/download/cleancih.htm

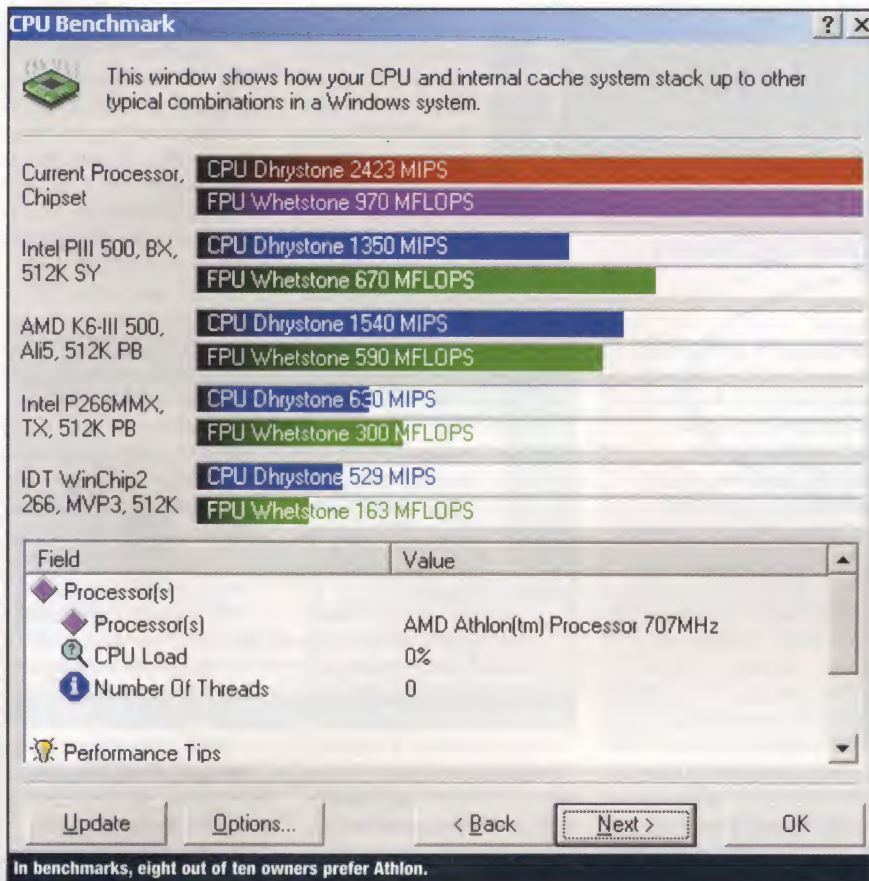
To those that said we should have our wrists slapped for not suggesting a virus in the first place, it should be safe to assume that anyone who downloads applications from the Internet (or receives via email) should have a virus scanner installed. No?

SCREEN CRAZY

Q When I start up my PC, the icons on the desktop keep arranging themselves as they

Intel's Celeron 500MHz,
now with sticky-out feet.





want. The positioning, orientation and size of the screen also changes each time. Is there any way I can save the settings as I want them and not have to change it every time I start up the stupid thing?

Andy

A Right-click on the desktop, select **Arrange Icons** from the pop-up menu that appears, then **deselect the Auto Arrange option**. Now your icons should stay where you put them. If you move them about and just want to neaten things up, right-click on the desktop and select **Line up Icons**. If the actual size of your screen keeps changing, which in turn causes the icons to shuffle about, it could be that your video drivers are suspect – we’ve certainly had this trouble in the past with an old ATI Rage card. Get the latest drivers from the Web and reinstall them.

P233 BEATS ATHLON

Q I decided it was time to upgrade my PC so I went out and bought an Athlon 600 and an ASUS k7m motherboard. They installed fine and I got the machine up and running – but I found that it was very, very slow, showing only 40fps in *Quake II* at 800 x 600. I have a GeForce

Annihilator DDR from my old machine – an AMD K6-2-350 – and got 80fps in *Quake II* at 1024 x 768! I bought an Athlon 300W power supply, a 20.4Gb Maxtor hard drive and Windows 98 – none of which has made the slightest bit of difference.

I used SiSoft’s *Sandra* and it said that my CPU and cache were performing worse than a P233; I also looked on the Creative website and it said there was a “compatibility problem” between the Annihilator and the ASUS motherboard. I wrote to AMD, Creative and ASUS in order to try and get to the bottom of it all, but received no response from any of them.

I’m really stuck, I don’t know what’s going on with my PC, I can’t play games and I feel as though I’ve been had! Is there any way you could use your powers of influence to try and find out what’s wrong with my machine? I have the latest Creative drivers and AGP miniport drivers and I’ve tried some of the suggestions on the Creative website – none of which have worked.

Matthew Day

A This was sounding very much like an AGP problem until you mentioned the *Sandra* tests. If the CPU tests are rating you that slow, then your whole system is running slow, and not just the video card. We’d

suspect that the video card is probably working fine.

We’ve checked the ASUS website and the details of the motherboard and there’s not exactly much that can be set wrong. The lowest clock speed your board can go down to (according to the site) is 100MHz, so if you get this wrong you’re going to overclock the CPU and run it faster not slower than normal.

We’d recommend downloading and flashing in the BIOS update from the Web, and if that doesn’t work, simply take your motherboard back and exchange it for another one: this is precisely what any of the companies you tried to contact would recommend (if they bothered to talk to you). As it is still early days for the Athlon processor it might be best to stick to a board recommended by AMD, such as the Gigabyte GA-71 with the 751/756 chipset.

COSTLY COMPAQ

Q I am an ex-pat Brit living in Dubai and I have a serious problem. I own a Compaq Presario desktop 2254 which runs on a 233 AMD K6 with 32Mb RAM, a 3Gb HDD and a Voodoo3 2000 PCI. I wanted to upgrade to 64Mb RAM, but was informed by the vendor, Jumbo Electronics, that to

Bindings Advanced NetBIOS
DNS Configuration Gateway WINS Configuration IP Address

An IP address can be automatically assigned to this computer. If your network does not automatically assign IP addresses, ask your network administrator for an address, and then type it in the space below.

☐ Obtain an IP address automatically

☒ Specify an IP address:

IP Address: 192.168.0.6

Subnet Mask: 255.255.255.0

OK Cancel

TCP/IP Address Settings dialog from Windows 98.

do this would cost me 1500 dirhams (about £400). Is this true? I’ve noticed most 32Mb SIMMs going for about £40 quid! Is this a ploy by Compaq to drag more money out of its daft customers?

CB, Dubai

A There are a surprising number of suppliers who come out with all manner of sales-oriented mumbo-jumbo about SIMMs being “tested to a higher specification” and “manufactured specifically for your machine”, and we dare say that Compaq would then blame cheap components (ie your SIMMs) for any problems you encounter. However, we’d guess you are well beyond your warranty now, so save yourself one heap of money and don’t worry about using unbranded memory. An early Wandybox(™) was a Compaq and it got by fine without it.

NO NET QUAKE

Q I have a problem running first-person shooters over my LAN. I don’t think I have it set up properly, although I can run Windows programs such as *Hearts* and I can share files with no problems. At the moment I am using Windows Logon and I have NetBEUI, TCP/IP and IPX loaded. However, when I try to run something like *Quake*, I can’t

see the other PCs on the network. The two machines have genius network cards connected by a single BNC cable.

David Martin

A We’re going to point an accusing finger at your TCP/IP configuration. When you have multiple protocols loaded, Windows will use whichever one it can find that works (usually NetBEUI, as it doesn’t require any configuration from the user). This is fine, except most modern games require you to use TCP/IP (yes, we know *Half-Life* works with IPX, but we’ll press on with getting the TCP/IP setup right as this protocol is by far and away the more useful for you to have working).

Unless you have a DHCP server (which you don’t), you’ll need to assign both machines a unique IP address and also set up the Subnet Mask. Go to both machines, right-click on the ‘Network Neighbourhood’ icon on your desktop and select ‘Properties’. Double-click on the ‘TCP/IP’ entry and, in the ‘IP Address’ tab, set one machine to 192.168.0.1 and the other to 192.168.0.2. Set the Subnet Mask on both to 255.255.255.0. Reboot the machines when asked. ☑

WATCHDOG

Feeling frustrated and lonely? Need someone to talk to? Well, **PC ZONE** is here to help. We're ready to track down the answers to your consumer nightmares

★ ANSWERED BY Adam Phillips

LIVING IN A WORLD OF HURT?

We're here to help. If you've got a consumer issue that needs addressing, then drop us a line. But please remember that technical issues are not covered by Watchdog – if you have a techie problem, write to Dear Wandy (page 128).

WRITE TO Watchdog, **PC ZONE**, Dennis Publishing, 19 Bolsover Street, London W1P 7HJ.

EMAIL us at letters.pczone@dennis.co.uk with the subject heading **Watchdog**.

BUNGLED BY JUNGLE?

Q I was recently introduced to the wonders of DVD when a friend of mine came over with his PC – equipped with a DVD drive. "Fantastic," I thought. "I'm gonna have to get me one of these." So the next day I logged onto Jungle.com and ordered a 10x Panasonic Drive for £74.84. This order was placed on February 9, at which time the drive was: "Awaiting stock or dispatch."

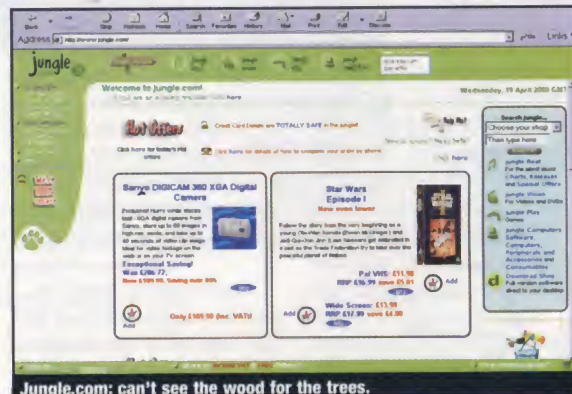
I have checked every day since, and still (March 7), they are awaiting stock that will apparently not be in until March 31. That means I won't get it until early April – about two months after the order. Now I don't know if this is just me being stupid, but if a customer ordered

something from your company you would want to make sure you got the item to them as soon as possible – to avoid them writing to their favourite computer magazine who will no doubt get on their case!

This has definitely deterred me from ever buying anything again from Jungle.com, which is a pity because, being a student, I find its prices great – or acceptable anyway – and easily within my budget. I was going to email them to find out why I'm having to wait two months for one piece of hardware, but I thought I had a better chance of getting an answer if I wrote to you first.

Frazer Verth

A When we approached Jungle.com they did get a response to us. We quote:



Jungle.com: can't see the wood for the trees.

"Jungle.com are most disappointed to read Mr Verth's letter to *PC Plus* regarding his order for the MP3 player placed on the February 9, 2000," offered Dale Knowles, a spokesperson for the company.

Err... *PC Plus*? MP3 player? Never mind... so what's been going on with Frazer's DVD drive order? "The product Mr Verth ordered is not yet on general release – and will not be until June," the company

SNOWED IN...

Q I was heading home via Electronics Boutique one afternoon and popped in to pick up a copy of *Supreme Snowboarding*. Not in stock? I have to wait one week? "Sod that," I thought, "Internet shopping has paved a yellow brick road around such annoyances these days!" So the question was, who should I try? Gameplay seems to appear quite a lot in your magazine so I went with them.

The order went through fine. Received a confirmation email – even better. Oh, I get a free gift

too? Three working days, eh? Nice. Cheapest possible price guarantee? Cool...

One week later and still nothing. Quick call: "Sorry, out of stock – give us a day or two." I took a deep breath and thought: "OK, OK, no problem, I got unlucky." Another week passed and still no news. One quick call later and I was told: "Stock just in, will be with you the day after tomorrow."

Wonderful news! Another week later, still nothing. By now, I'd seen the game in Electronics

Boutique for the past two weeks for £7 less than I had paid at Gameplay! Grrrr! Another phone call: "Oh, sorry, the delay seems to have been because the free gift we allocated you was not in stock. We'll just change that and send it off to you."

Three days later I finally get my game with some pointless 'free gift'. Well, I love the game – I'm a snowboarding/skiing addict back in real life – but all the hassle didn't half hack me off.

Snowboarding's still an option even though summer is upon us.

Just thought I would send this in as a warning to those looking for a high street alternative. My advice? "Sod that" and stick with the street. The prices are just as good – and you get the games on the spot.

David Schluter

A Shoddy. That's the only word for such service. In a time when we're all starting to experiment with buying goods online, stories like this don't exactly instill confidence in the minds of the average punter. Watchdog approached the bods at Gameplay and asked them how such sloppy service managed to rear its ugly head in the first place: "We would like to sincerely apologise for what sounds to be a most terrible shopping experience," offered a spokesperson for the company. "In the second instance, we would like to offer Mr Schluter a full explanation and refund on this product

to part way compensate for the stress of what should be a painless experience."

Gameplay claims it is unusual to hear of such problems and that it always strives to provide "the most enjoyable and rewarding experience possible" when using its site. "In striving to be the best and ensuring this is the case, we will always make changes where needed. Most recently, changes have been made to the e-commerce system, the cosmetic appearance of the site and our fulfilment operation," continued Gameplay. "It would appear that your order was unfortunately caught up in some part of these changes and has gone unnoticed."

According to Gameplay, it has the best prices around and will do its best to match or beat other prices – even if the product is waiting to be dispatched. "We hope Mr Schluter will accept our apologies and, as an isolated case, may feel he now has the confidence to try the service again," says Gameplay.



continued. "Unfortunately, the supplier did not make Jungle.com aware of this until March 20 when we emailed Mr Verth and gave him the option of cancelling his order. We still have Mr Verth's order on the system and when the product is released, this will be processed – unless he chooses to cancel it. This product was removed from the site on March 20, and will not feature again until it is available to the customer."

Jungle.com says that from time to time information is delayed and on this occasion they were unable to inform the customer earlier: "While we work to our utmost to ensure the site shows the most up-to-date information, there will be those rare occasions when we are given the wrong details from a third party/manufacturer. Unfortunately, in these circumstances we must take this information to be correct unless they tell us otherwise."

In the meantime, Jungle.com apologises for the inconvenience caused. Let us know if you ever get your hands on the drive. When you do, "PC Plus" recommends that you get your hands on a DVD of John Carpenter's *The Thing*.

SAITEK SLIPPAGE

Q I have been buying and receiving peripherals for my PC since last September. These include the Saitek Cyborg 2000 Digital Stick and the Saitek P750 gamepad – both of which I am extremely happy with. Imagine my delight when I got hold of a copy of Saitek's 1999 catalogue and saw that they were bringing out a programmable mouse and gamepad combination – the GM2 – with a release scheduled for the fourth quarter of 1999. Great, I thought, I'll get my parents to buy it for me as a Christmas present. To check the release date, I rang Saitek and was told: "Yes, the pad will be released at the end of this month (November)."

After a while I hassled PC World – did they know anything? No! I put in another phone call to Saitek, who told me: "Yes, it will be out by next week." This carried on, Christmas came and went, and the website still said, "released fourth quarter '99".

I decided to leave it for a

while, but then I saw that Gameplay was advertising the GM2 in the back of your mag. I logged on and ordered it, saving £10 on the RRP. I again waited for a while, but heard nothing. I phoned Gameplay and was told: "It will be released at the end/beginning of Jan/Feb!"

As these release dates often just come and go, I placed another phone call to Gameplay – this time I'm told the GM2 will be out by, "the end of Feb".

By now I was getting really annoyed. In a last-ditch attempt, I phoned Gameplay again and was told: "Yes sir, we have a release date of March." I asked: "Any specific date?" To which the reply was: "No sir, just March."

I decided to hear this straight from the horse's mouth, so I phoned Saitek and was told: "The release date is the end of March." So I continued to wait! On Monday March 20 I phoned Gameplay. It still had no specific release date. I phoned Saitek again, only to be told the release date had been put back to the end of April/beginning of May!

I phoned Gameplay to see whether it had this new date, but they knew nothing of it. I am obviously not the only one who wants this product as when I did phone Saitek it was the receptionist who told me the release date and, in my experience, receptionists are the last people in any loop.



➊ The Saitek GM2 proved to be a hard mouse to trap.

I know release dates of games get put back by ridiculous amounts of time, but the release of the GM2 has now been delayed by at least six months.

Ben Sweet

A Blimey, you're a bit of a Saitek fan aren't you? Well, in the face of such rampant customer loyalty, we thought we'd take your fair comments to the people at the



company. "Firstly, let me say how sorry I am to hear about the gentleman in question's predicament," said a spokesperson for Saitek. "He is obviously a loyal user of Saitek gaming peripherals and it is always upsetting to let people down who have previously trusted in your company's products."

Saitek says the problem with the GM2 is that it was originally delayed prior to Christmas due to a bug in Microsoft's DirectX 7. This was fixed by Microsoft in December 1999, but the product had to be re-tested with the bug fix and this took them through to the end of January 2000.

"After a re-scheduled mass production and the mandatory six weeks shipping time, I can confirm that we are due to receive the first quantities of the product next week," offered Saitek. "If Ben would like to call us we will be able to direct him as to where and when he can buy the product."

Meanwhile, Saitek offered its sincerest apologies for the inconvenience caused.

BOGUS BONUS?

Q A couple of months ago I persuaded my parents to open an account with Home Software World. On page two of the February 2000 HSW catalogue there was the following offer:

"Buy two and claim a free mystery game worth £39.99." Great, I thought. I was deliberating over two titles anyway and this gave me good reason to get both, which I did. A few weeks later my order arrived – the two pieces of software I had ordered and a copy of Internet Cyber Patrol. ICP was never intended to be called a "game".

"I would like this to be a warning to those looking for a high street alternative. My advice? 'Sod that' and stick with the street. Prices are just as good – and you get the goods on the spot"

ONLINE SHOPPING LEAVES DAVID SCHLUTER OUT IN THE COLD

I re-read the offending offer and it had definitely said "free game", so I went to the HSW website and sent them a letter of complaint. That was a week ago and I have had no answer. I was wondering if you could help? Gamers should not have to put up with being lied to.

Phil Hare

A Strong words indeed! We forwarded your complaint to HSW and it has

please select any game of your choice up to a value of £39.99 (release price) from your current magazine. Please dispose of ICP as you see fit. Finally, I am sorry your son did not receive a reply to his email and regret that you have not received our usual high standard of service."

What a result! Let us know which game you ended up going for...

YOUR DETAILS PLEASE...

If you are writing in to complain about a product, whether it be a ropey piece of software or a shoddy PC, please supply us with your full name, address and contact number. With PCs especially, make sure that you also include all purchasing details, such as reference and invoice numbers. It means that we can try and resolve your problems much faster.

SAVE 50%

EXTENDED PLAY IV

To install this CD-ROM, open

EXTENDED PLAY IV - FREE

- DK II • Unreal Tournament • Warbirds
- Incubation and much more.

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DPPCZS84B PCD315

CD-ROM drive and run the `pczone.exe` file, then simply follow the instructions on screen. Technical support for this disc is available on 01708 250 250 at the following times: 9.30am to 5.00pm Monday-Friday (9.30am-8.00pm Wednesday) 10.00am-2.00pm Saturday

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Please note that Windows 95 is required for most programs on
the FREE CD-ROMs and that most of the have limited functionality.

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- ☒ I am already a subscriber, please extend my subscription and send me my 2 FREE CD-ROMs.

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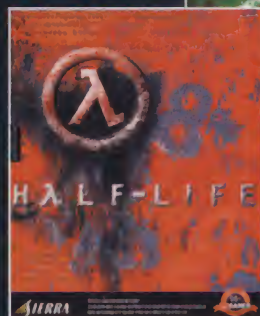
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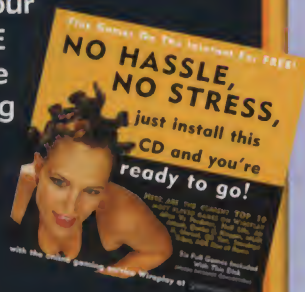
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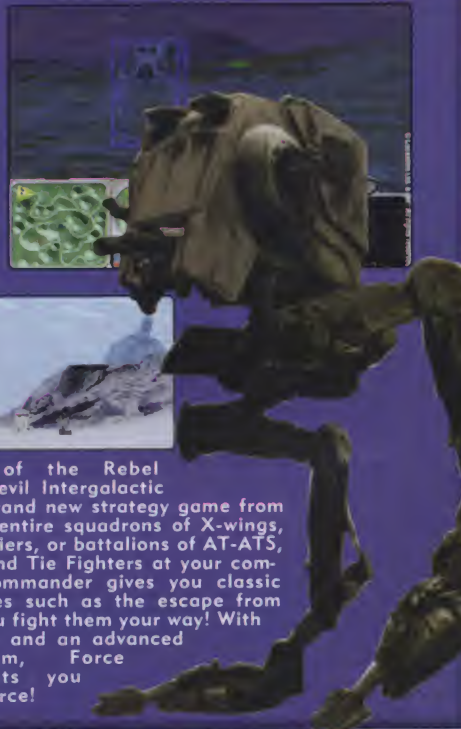
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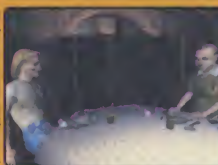


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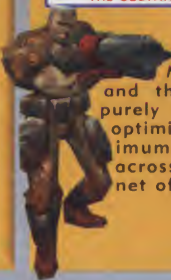
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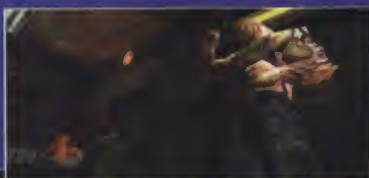
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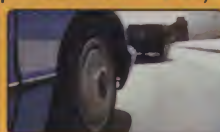
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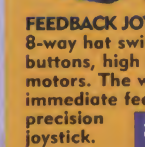
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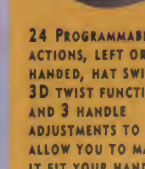


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PCZONE TOP 100

Welcome to the definitive buyers' guide for all discerning PC gamers. The games that grace these pages represent the best titles across all genres. Check here for regular updates

This is the new *PC ZONE* Top 100. Within it you will find the best games you can currently buy for your PC. All the games here deserve a place in our illustrious Top 100 as we go to print, but that could all change next month when newer titles come in and older games receive new ratings to reflect where they stand in the great scheme of things. Shrewd buyers will always check here first before parting with their money.

BENCHMARK GAME

Benchmark titles are the games that you simply must have if you are a fan of the genre. They are considered by the *PC ZONE* team to be absolute classics and should be bought without hesitation. All new games are compared to their genre's benchmark title when they are reviewed. Bear this in mind before writing into Mailbox

complaining that the latest 3D shooter didn't automatically get 90 per cent; check here first to see what it's up against! Additionally, all games in that genre will receive a new rating every time a new benchmark title comes along.

NEW ENTRY

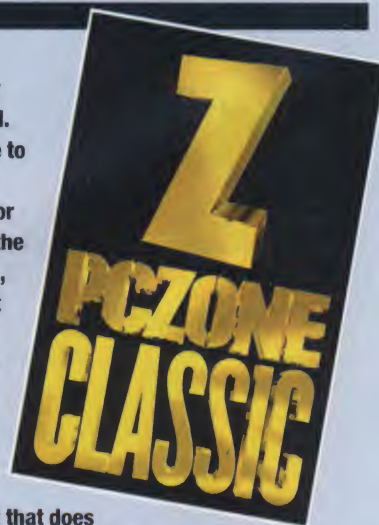
In the wonderful world of PC gaming, new titles come in every month that are often better than some of the games in the Top 100. When this happens, they will gain their rightful place in the Top 100, and a lesser title will drop out to make room for it.

BUDGET

If a game in the Top 100 is available on budget, it will be tagged accordingly. Games that are lower in price than other titles in their genre do not necessarily receive a new score to reflect this. The latest score the game received will still apply; it is up to you to decide whether or not the game is worth buying at its new price point.

Under the *ZONE* scoring system, new games will have to be pretty spectacular to receive this award. They will have to take their genre to unprecedented new heights, and represent a major step forward for PC gaming. As you can see from the *PC ZONE* Hall Of Fame on page 81, there are now very few titles that can justifiably be described as *PC ZONE* Classics. This trend will continue across all genres.

Generally speaking, all *ZONE* Classics are must-have titles (the benchmark title being the definitive game of the genre), but that does not mean you should discount games that score 80+ per cent. These games receive the *PC ZONE* Award for Excellence and are essential buys if you are a fan of the genre the game fits into. Classics, on the other hand, are games we think will appeal to everyone and will bring new fans to that particular genre. There will not be many of them, as when we say a game is a Classic, we mean it!



GAME OF THE MOMENT

These are the games currently residing on our hard drives



CHRIS
EVERQUEST: RUINS OF KUNARK



DAVE
QUAKE III



RICHIE
ALLEGIANC



MARK
CHAMP MANAGER 99/00



MARTIN
STARLANCER

Buy on-line www.jakarta.co.uk

FIRST-PERSON SHOOTERS

STRATEGY

HALF-LIFE

BENCHMARK GAME



PCZ #71 • 95%

✱ Taking the first-person shooter as its starting point, *Half-Life* redefines the genre with an engrossing story, cracking atmosphere and some of the best AI ever coded. *Half-Life* is probably still the best game you can install on your PC, and it's now available with the superb *Opposing Force* add-on in the 'Generations' pack.

PUBLISHER Sierra
• 0118 9209 100

UNREAL TOURNAMENT

PCZ #81 • 90%

✱ Played over a network or the Internet, *Unreal Tournament* is more than a match for *Quake III*'s multiplayer, with a combination of well-designed maps and diverse gameplay. The single-player mode might be too short, but it's still going to be more than a challenge for most.

PUBLISHER GT Interactive • 020 7258 3791

QUAKE III ARENA

PCZ #87 • 89%

✱ The biggest brand name in PC gaming is back. The sheer speed, intensity and unrelenting action of *Quake III* makes it an essential purchase for all shoot 'em up fans, but sadly the lack of variety prevents it from topping *Unreal Tournament*.

PUBLISHER Activision • 01895 456700

ALIENS VS PREDATOR

PCZ #77 • 87%

✱ It might not be the best, but it's definitely the scariest FPS you can buy. *Aliens Vs Predator* is also the only game that offers three distinct ways of playing through the game, so if you're looking for a solid single-player blast, this provides excellent value for money.

PUBLISHER Electronic Arts • 01753 549442

QUAKE II: QUAD DAMAGE

PCZ #59 • 86%

✱ The sequel to 'the most important PC game ever' turns out to be more than worth the wait. Single-player mode might be a let-down, but if you have access to a network or a fast Internet connection you'll be in heaven. Now available as a pack with all the official mission packs.

PUBLISHER Activision • 01895 456700

THIEF II: THE METAL AGE

PCZ #88 • 82%

✱ The original *Thief* set new standards in FPS titles with its move away from mindless action towards stealth, and its excellent use of light and sound. This sequel delivers more of the same quality gameplay, minus the out-of-place zombie levels.

PUBLISHER Eidos • 020 8636 3000

SHOGO: MOBILE ARMOUR DIVISION

PCZ #71 • 81%

✱ Half *Quake*, half *MechWarrior*, this game breathes fresh air into a stale genre. Boasting great graphics and storyline, its only faults are iffy AI and the fact that it's a bit too easy for hardcore *Quake* fans.

PUBLISHER Microdis • 00 33 1 4601 5401

SOLDIER OF FORTUNE

PCZ #89 • 80%

✱ More like an arcade explosion of unmitigated violence than a FPS in the *Half-Life* mould, *SoF* is a great deal of fun. It's also very sick. If you can stomach amputations and decapitations, then we can guarantee you pure, mindless entertainment.

PUBLISHER Activision • 01895 456700

KINGPIN: LIFE OF CRIME

PCZ #77 • 80%

✱ This controversial title should be talked about for its excellent gameplay and graphics rather than its violence and swearing. Because, quite frankly, that side of the game was crap. We still stand by the game though – it's 'classic adult entertainment'.

PUBLISHER Interplay • 01628 423666

SIN

PCZ #70 • 80%

✱ Releasing *Sin* at the same time as the vastly superior *Half-Life* was commercial suicide. But you can now bag this title for less than a tenner, which gives you the perfect excuse to find out just how good it actually is. No *Classic*, but an excellent game in its own right.

PUBLISHER Eidos • 020 8636 3000

SHOGUN: TOTAL WAR

BENCHMARK GAME



PCZ #89 • 93%

Shogun is the first strategy game that's blown us away in a long time. Command enormous armies in epic and bloody battles, send ninjas to assassinate enemy generals and conquer your way through the map of feudal Japan. The 3D engine works beautifully and the in-game options never get in the way of instant playability.

PUBLISHER Electronic Arts
• 01753 549442

AGE OF EMPIRES II

PCZ #84 • 89%

✱ It might not be radically different from the original, but sometimes evolution is just as good as revolution. In *Age II*, the gameplay has been honed to perfection with balanced units and strong single and multiplayer campaigns. Forget the hype of *Tiberian Sun* and opt for this classic RTS.

PUBLISHER Microsoft • 0345 002000

CIVILIZATION II: TEST OF TIME

PCZ #68 • 88%

✱ A title that lives up to its name, *Civilization II* is probably the oldest game in the Top 100 and it will probably still be around in years to come. Turn-based and in 2D, it offers unlimited replayability and depth. One of the few games that everyone should own.

PUBLISHER Hasbro • 020 8569 1234

EARTH 2150

PCZ #90 • 86%

NEWENTRY A fantastic 3D engine and great detail team up with sheer playability to make this one of the best RTSs around. Second only to *Shogun* this year, *Earth 2150* is a more traditional strategy title, but it takes the genre even further than it has been before.

PUBLISHER Mattel Interactive • 0144 424 6333

HOMEWORLD

PCZ #82 • 85%

✱ *Homeworld* delivers the dream of millions of PC strategists the world over: a fully three-dimensional, strategic experience. The vast expanse of space is the battleground, the hundreds of ships at your command the weapon, and the only limits are your imagination.

PUBLISHER Sierra • 0118 920 9100

THEOCRACY

PCZ #88 • 84%

✱ Blending the best of *Age Of Empires* and *Civilization*, *Theocracy*'s mix of real-time and turn-based gameplay allows you to guide the Aztecs through history and attempt to right the wrongs of the Hispanic conquerors. In short, an unexpected gem.

PUBLISHER Ubi Soft • 020 8944 9000

IMPERIUM GALACTICA II

PCZ #85 • 83%

✱ Space expansion and empire building has never looked so good. This title boasts the depth of a turn-based strategy game with the immediate action of real-time, plus a great interface and tutorial, so you'll know your way around in no time.

PUBLISHER GT Interactive • 020 7258 3791

C&C: TIBERIAN SUN

PCZ #81 • 82%

✱ Perhaps not as stunning as one might have hoped after a three-year wait, *Tiberian Sun* is nevertheless a truly great game. Pushing the *Command & Conquer* genre to its limits, it offers PC strategists immense depth, detail and variety.

PUBLISHER Electronic Arts • 01753 549442

TOTAL ANNIHILATION

PCZ #56 • 82%

✱ With a ridiculous number of units and unrivalled pace, the original *TA* still stands head and shoulders above more recent efforts. No story to speak of and weak single-player action, but still, for a tenner, no one should be without a copy.

PUBLISHER GT Interactive • 020 7258 3791

STAR WARS: FORCE COMMANDER

PCZ #89 • 81%

✱ Not the stunning classic everyone was hoping for, but the first *Star Wars* RTS is still a fun game. Based on the original trilogy, *FC* recreates scenes from the films along with all your favourite characters. Play it against other people for maximum enjoyment.

PUBLISHER Activision • 01895 456 7000

ROLE-PLAYING GAMES

SYSTEM SHOCK 2

BENCHMARK
GAME

PCZ #80 • 93%

✦ Definitely one of the most compelling, original and disturbing games to hit the PC, *System Shock 2* manages to successfully roll the genres of role-playing, action and adventure into one. Play it in the house on your own with the lights off to prove how hard you are. In short, it's a title that's absolutely indispensable.

PUBLISHER Electronic Arts • 01753 549442

PLANESCAPE: TORMENT

PCZ #87 • 87%

✦ An incredible game from Black Isle, creators of *Baldur's Gate*. It's a dark, adult, scorching of an RPG. Moreover, the character development is the best we've seen in any game of its kind – and the story is compelling, with well-scripted dialogue.

PUBLISHER Interplay • 01628 423666

BALDUR'S GATE

PCZ #73 • 85%

✦ With every developer 'going 3D' these days, it's refreshing to find an old-school RPG that combines traditional D&D role-playing with sumptuous 2D graphics. In a nutshell, *Baldur's Gate* is intelligent and involving in equal measures.

PUBLISHER Interplay • 01628 423666

FINAL FANTASY VII

PCZ #66 • 84%

✦ Despite the recent release of *FFVIII*, we still rate this earlier episode in the series above it. The story is better, there are more subgames and the whole thing is more involving, especially if you like Japanese-style cartoony graphics. And it should be out on budget soon.

PUBLISHER Eidos Interactive • 020 8636 3000

FALLOUT 2

PCZ #71 • 83%

✦ Does exactly what it says on the tin. Twice as big as the original, but utilising the exact same engine. If you liked the first game, you'll love this – not twice as much, but certainly for twice as long. A real life-sapper and one of the best RPGs money can buy.

PUBLISHER Interplay • 01628 423666

FINAL FANTASY VIII

PCZ #87 • 83%

✦ *FFVIII* features westernised graphics and the most incredible cut-scenes we've ever seen on a PC. Like its predecessor, this outing suffers from console linearity and repetitive battles, but it still retains enough charm to entrance most gamers.

PUBLISHER Eidos • 020 8636 3000

BUDGET

DIABLO

PCZ #48 • 78%

✦ Standard hack 'n' slash fare, but pulled off with such style that it's addictive. A great storyline compensates for repetitive arcade combat and supremely detailed animation makes it a superb coffee-table game. The much anticipated sequel is out this summer.

PUBLISHER Zblac/Blizzard • 01626 332233

ODIUM

PCZ #87 • 74%

✦ Imagine an RPG in the style of *Final Fantasy*, with battle sequences à la *X-COM* and you'll get a good idea of what *Oidium* is like. The story is set in a European city populated by UN soldiers and an amazing variety of monsters. In short, it's curiously compelling.

PUBLISHER Ubi Soft • 020 8944 9000

NOX

PCZ #87 • 72%

✦ This *Diablo*-style RPG is immensely addictive. The levels may be a little repetitive, but you'll find that persistence pays off in the form of great spells and weapons. Watch out for a massive multiplayer community spawning around this one.

PUBLISHER Electronic Arts • 01753 549442

LANDS OF LORE III

PCZ #74 • 70%

✦ Westwood knows how to tell a good story, and this latest title in the series is certainly the best of the lot. Combine that with ease of use and some highly polished artwork, and you'll find *Lore III* a great alternative to more traditional RPG efforts.

PUBLISHER Westwood/EA • 01753 549442

ACTION/ADVENTURES

GRIM FANDANGO

BENCHMARK
GAME

PCZ #71 • 90%

✦ If you've followed the successes of LucasArts from the early days of *Monkey Island*, *Sam & Max* and *Day Of The Tentacle*, this is a must-buy. Sublime graphics and genuine humour ensure it's a classic. A word of warning: it's bloody hard and if your mind doesn't work laterally you'll be playing it until the day you die.

PUBLISHER LucasArts • 020 7368 2255

DISCWORLD NOIR

PCZ #79 • 89%

✦ Although the point-and-click adventure genre is dying, *Discworld Noir* is very much alive. It's darker in style than previous *Discworld* games, and is all the better for it in our opinion, particularly if you're not a fan of Pratchett's off-the-wall humour. Don't miss it.

PUBLISHER GT Interactive • 020 7258 3791

INDIANA JONES AND THE
INFERNAL MACHINE

PCZ #84 • 88%

✦ LucasArts moves away from the point-and-click genre and into *Tomb Raider* territory for the latest Indy outing. Thankfully the adventure elements are still in place in this whip-cracking romp.

PUBLISHER Activision • 01895 456 7000

THE NOMAD SOUL

PCZ #83 • 87%

✦ Distinctly odd, but also refreshingly original, *The Nomad Soul* is a huge, intricate world populated by lap-dancers and (gulp) David Bowie. At turns adventure, beat 'em up and platformer, it's insanely ambitious and almost pulls it off.

PUBLISHER Eidos • 020 8636 3000

NOCTURNE

PCZ #84 • 86%

✦ Why would you pay good money to be scared? Because it's damn good fun that's why, and if you find the average PC game laughable, we dare you to sit through *Nocturne* with your curtains drawn. It's a beautiful exercise in computer-generated fear.

PUBLISHER Take 2 • 01753 722900

MESSIAH

PCZ #85 • 85%

✦ Shiny's wonderful shooter features a chubby cherub, but also a bunch of whores and some gratuitous swearing. As Bob, under-age agent of God, you must possess people's bodies and, like a good Christian, kill absolutely everything that gets in your way.

PUBLISHER Interplay • 01628 423666

TOMB RAIDER:
THE LAST REVELATION

PCZ #83 • 85%

✦ Lara's back in her fourth (and best) adventure so far. More moves, better looks, intricate puzzles and a well-developed plot. It's not going to win over the cynics, but it's still a damn fine game.

PUBLISHER Eidos Interactive • 020 8636 3000

RESIDENT EVIL II

PCZ #75 • 82%

✦ Not quite as attractive as it could have been, *Resident Evil II* remains one of the most tensely gripping adventure games of recent years. A modicum of simple puzzles, offset by liberal and gratuitous gore, make for top entertainment.

PUBLISHER Virgin • 020 7368 2255

MONKEY ISLAND
BOUNTY PACK

PCZ #74 • 80%

✦ *Monkey Island 1* and *2* are perhaps the finest point-and-clickers ever to grace the PC. The third outing may have been disappointing, but it would be a sin to exclude it from this excellent triple pack.

PUBLISHER LucasArts/Activision • 01985 456 7000

SAM & MAX AND
DAY OF THE TENTACLE

NOT REVIEWED • 78%

✦ Two of the finest adventure games in the world ever are now available in a single pack for a bargain price. They still match most titles that are released today, so go and buy them. Now.

PUBLISHER LucasArts/Activision • 01985 456 7000



RACING GAMES

COLIN MCRAE RALLY

BENCHMARK GAME



BUDGET

PCZ #68 • 91%

✦ Sporting an updated TOCA engine, *Colin McRae* is still the benchmark in rally simulations. It boasts realistic handling, car customisation and stacks of multiplayer options, which all contribute to keeping it well ahead of the competition. The fact that it's now available as a budget title makes it an absolute steal.

PUBLISHER Codemasters
• 01926 814132



MIDTOWN MADNESS

PCZ #79 • 89%

✦ Jump in your car and drive around Chicago participating in races, annoying the police, or just cruising around. Not quite *Grand Theft Auto 3D*, but just as much fun, this is definitely the best all-out arcade racer you can currently buy on PC.

PUBLISHER Microsoft • 0345 002000



MOTOCROSS MADNESS

PCZ #67 • 85%

✦ This is an astoundingly addictive game. It boasts loads of game and race options and is tremendous fun, especially when played with a Microsoft Freestyle Pro pad over a network. If you want to have fun on two wheels, this is an absolute must-buy.

PUBLISHER Microsoft • 0345 002000



LE MANS 24 HOURS

PCZ #87 • 83%

✦ Although not quite as challenging as the race it's based on, *Le Mans 24 Hours* is a driving game for skillful players who know their brakes from their elbows. You can even get involved in a rewarding career mode culminating in the famous race itself.

PUBLISHER Infogrames • 020 7738 8199

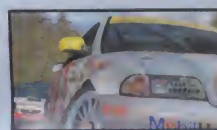


RALLY CHAMPIONSHIP

PCZ #84 • 82%

✦ Close, but no *McRae*. That was the verdict from the boy Hill on this new racer. It looks fantastic and the on-screen Ordnance Survey map is a nice touch, but it's let down by some poor camera angles and unnecessarily solid obstacles. Ouch.

PUBLISHER Actualise • 01625 855015



TOCA 2

PCZ #76 • 82%

✦ Predictably, Codemasters has gone and done it again. More cars, more tracks and the same stunning attention to detail make *TOCA 2* an essential purchase for petrol heads. Graphically, it may not be a massive improvement, but gameplay-wise it most certainly is.

PUBLISHER Codemasters • 01926 814132



MONACO GRAND PRIX

PCZ #69 • 81%

✦ Essentially this is *F1 Racing Simulation 2*, and an F1 fan's wet dream come true. The game looks beautiful, plays even better, and the Artificial Intelligence is second to none. However, bear in mind that you need a hefty machine to have it looking its best.

PUBLISHER Ubi Soft • 020 8944 9000



NEED FOR SPEED PORSCHE 2000

PCZ #90 • 80%

NEWENTRY ✦ Not as good as hooking up with your mates at the arcade, but still a damn good conversion of a damn fine game. Forget realism and concentrate on flinging your car around the track as fast as you can. Who needs depth when racing is this much fun?

PUBLISHER Electronic Arts • 01753 549442



DRIVER

PCZ #82 • 80%

✦ Criticised for lacking the depth of *Midtown Madness* (it is a PlayStation conversion after all), this is still a good game. A pumping '70s soundtrack helps to recreate that *Starsky & Hutch* feeling. A wheel, an afro haircut and a false moustache are, of course, essential.

PUBLISHER GT Interactive • 020 7258 3791



SUPERBIKE 2000

PCZ #88 • 78%

✦ The best motorcycling sim on PC, this game sports incredible visuals, slick handling and astonishing detail. But it's too easy to fall off unless you use computer-assisted help. For pure two-wheeled action, *Motocross Madness* is still the best option.

PUBLISHER Electronic Arts • 01753 549442

FLIGHT SIMULATORS

FALCON 4

BENCHMARK GAME



PCZ #72 • 92%

✦ We waited patiently for years for this title to arrive, and the good news is that for once we weren't disappointed. *Falcon 4* sports beautiful 3D-accelerated graphics and a dynamic campaign structure that leaves the competition well and truly standing. If you're going to buy one flight sim, make it this one – it's the best example of its kind and we guarantee that you won't be disappointed.

PUBLISHER MicroProse
• 01454 893893



BUDGET

F-22 TOTAL AIR WAR

PCZ #68 • 89%

✦ This full-price new version of DID's masterpiece seems perhaps a bit of a rip-off for anyone who already owns *F-22 ADF*, but those of you who are looking to buy one of the greatest combat sims of recent years should seriously consider this title.

PUBLISHER Ocean/DID • 0161 832 6633



F/A-18E SUPER HORNET

PCZ #83 • 88%

✦ If you like your flight sims to be realistic with a great, big, capital 'R', then look no further. In fact, this game is so lifelike that the US Navy has adopted it for promotional work and ground-based familiarity training. But make sure you watch out for friendly fire.

PUBLISHER Titus Software • 01926 335 5400



MIG ALLEY

PCZ #80 • 87%

✦ *Mig Alley* gives hardcore flight simmers' piloting skills a run for their money, but don't let that put you off. If you're willing to put in the work, this title will repay you with a wealth of excellent in-flight graphics and a selection of brilliant mission planning elements.

PUBLISHER Empire Interactive • 020 8343 7337



ENEMY ENGAGED: COMANCHE HOKUM

PCZ #89 • 85%

✦ The latest helicopter sim to hit the shelves, this is also the best one to date. In no other game do you feel the excitement of being involved in a real war, largely due to an excellent dynamic campaign mode. Helicopter sims don't come any better than this classy title.

PUBLISHER Empire Interactive • 020 8343 7337



FLIGHT UNLIMITED III

PCZ #82 • 86%

✦ For all those sim aficionados who enjoy the experience of flying for its own sake rather than as a lame excuse for blasting other flying things to bits, this (along with the *Flight Sim* series) is an object of worship and devotion. It certainly deserves high praise.

PUBLISHER Electronic Arts • 01753 549442



FLANKER 2.0

PCZ #85 • 86%

✦ Hardcore pilots with a taste for Yank blood need look no further. Extremely hard to fly, but very rewarding nevertheless, *Flanker 2.0* recreates the real thing in minute detail. However, be warned: hours of practice are needed before you go off shooting stuff.

PUBLISHER SSI • 01293 651300



JANE'S USAF

PCZ #88 • 85%

✦ *USAF* offers the playability to let non-hardcore flyers have a successful spin. While this means that the standards of realism are nowhere near other titles, it fills the gap for those of us who don't care about such things. This is a great flight sim that anybody can enjoy.

PUBLISHER Electronic Arts • 01753 549442



JANE'S F/A-18

PCZ #89 • 84%

✦ Another game based on the US Navy's Super Hornet, this is an incredibly detailed jet sim that suffers slightly from being too hard for beginners. Graphically, it's up there with the best and the interface makes you feel as close to the real thing as is possible on a desktop.

PUBLISHER Electronic Arts • 01753 549442



TEAM ALLIGATOR

PCZ #85 • 84%

✦ Helicopter sims are rare but, when they appear on the scene, they are usually superb. Although *Team Alligator* doesn't quite surpass the cheaper *Apache Havoc*, it has truly beautiful graphics and feels great to fly. Without doubt, the best Russian chopper sim around.

PUBLISHER GT Interactive • 020 7258 3791

SPORTS

FIFA 2000

BENCHMARK
GAME

PCZ #84 • 88%

★ The *FIFA* franchise has been rolling on for years and it certainly gets better each time. Although it missed a classic rating by a whisker, *FIFA 2000* is still the best conversion of the finest sport known to man. If you're into your football, then what are you waiting for? You should own a copy of *FIFA 2000*. It's as simple as that.

PUBLISHER Electronic Arts
• 01753 549442

SUPREME SNOWBOARDING

PCZ #85 • 86%

★ Snowboarding is not a sport you'd expect to captivate a PC audience, but this game gives as exhilarating an experience as you could hope for without breaking a leg. Oh, and all the streetwise attitude you'd expect is here, of course.

PUBLISHER Infogrames • 020 8738 8199

NBA LIVE 2000

PCZ #85 • 83%

★ As slick as always, but what makes the 2K edition special is the inclusion of teams from the '50s onwards, comedy haircuts *et al*. Although not quite as immediate as *Inside Drive*, it's a more complete simulation of the sport all round.

PUBLISHER Electronic Arts • 01753 549442

NBA: INSIDE DRIVE

PCZ #82 • 82%

★ While not exactly the most popular sport in this country, *Inside Drive* manages to suck you in with its supreme playability. Its presentation is not quite up to EA standards (but then, what is?), but when the gameplay is this good, who cares?

PUBLISHER Microsoft • 0345 002 000

PGA CHAMPIONSHIP GOLF

PCZ #80 • 82%

★ Knocking *Links* off the office golfing perch is no mean feat, but *PGA's* gameplay is so addictive that all other contenders can tee off. Our very own Keith Pullin took the entire summer off to design his own courses for it. But he has got a hole in one in the head.

PUBLISHER Sierra • 0118 920 9100

VIRTUAL POOL 2

PCZ #58 • 82%

★ OK, so *Virtual Pool 2* scored one per cent less than its predecessor, but this follow-up beats it hands down. 3dfx support goes some way to pushing the series further, and the inclusion of English Pub rules make it a more essential purchase than before.

PUBLISHER Interplay • 01628 423666

JIMMY WHITE'S CUEBALL 2

PCZ #68 • 81%

★ The finest snooker simulation on the PC. Chalk your cue and take on the PC or your mates, and when you're tired of the baize you can move round and have a go on the fully-featured darts board instead. Saves going down the Working Men's Club.

PUBLISHER Virgin Interactive • 020 7368 2255

ACTUA SOCCER 3

PCZ #72 • 80%

★ If you can't get on with *FIFA*, then *Actua* is the second port of call for footy fans. It plays a faster game and there's a good range of options and a huge number of teams to play against, which helps to maintain its shelf life.

PUBLISHER Gremlin Interactive • 0114 273 8601

BRIAN LARA CRICKET

PCZ #75 • 78%

★ Cricket isn't the easiest game to convert to the PC, but Codemasters has done the best job, despite the fact that *Brian Lara Cricket* has obviously been ported straight over from the PlayStation. For aspiring country-dwellers everywhere.

PUBLISHER Codemasters • 01926 814132

TIGER WOODS 2000

PCZ #90 • 77%

★ Tiger's second outing proves to be as good looking as his first, and a lot more polished. There are eight courses, and if you get bored of those you can create your own. It still hasn't got the putting right, but it's very playable all the same.

PUBLISHER Electronic Arts • 01753 549442

SPACE COMBAT

X - BEYOND THE FRONTIER

BENCHMARK
GAME

PCZ #82 • 89%

★ The spirit of *Elite* lives on in this massive trading epic from Germany, in which you must buy and fight your way back home to Earth. The combat side of the gameplay may not be the best on offer, but with goods to trade and races to discover, it rewards patience with variety and months of play. This title is deeply hypnotic and beautiful, rather than tense and frenetic.

PUBLISHER THQ • 01483 767656

FREESPACE 2

PCZ #84 • 85%

★ Completely different from *X*, *FreeSpace 2* offers fast-paced dogfighting action all the way. It boasts a superb interface, epic story and amazing graphics, but it's a bit short-lived if you don't play online.

PUBLISHER Interplay • 020 7551 4222

X-WING: ALLIANCE

PCZ #77 • 83%

★ At last! Fly the Millennium Falcon in the final episode of the long-running *X-Wing* series. Certainly the best-looking *X-Wing* game to date, *Alliance* is slow at first, but boy does it pick up later on.

PUBLISHER Activision • 01895 456700

PRIVATEER 2

PCZ #44 • 80%

★ Not as open-ended as *Elite*, but far more rewarding as an overall experience. The graphics look great even today and, hey, it's on budget – so it's better value for money than ever.

PUBLISHER Electronic Arts • 01753 549442

WING COMMANDER
PROPHECY GOLD

PCZ #59 • 77%

★ The graphics look a bit dated now, but this is still a great game by anyone's standards. *Wing* neophytes start here.

PUBLISHER Electronic Arts • 01753 549442

MANAGEMENT

CM 99/2000

BENCHMARK
GAME

PCZ #84 • 92%

★ More than a game... it's a way of life. So say fans of the best football management game in existence. If you dare to play it you can kiss goodbye to your social life, and expect to spend hours each and every day poring over unknown players in a bid to discover the next Ronaldo. The word 'benchmark' doesn't really describe how much better than the competition this game is.

PUBLISHER Eidos • 020 8636 3000

THE SIMS

PCZ #87 • 86%

★ This game offers a staggering amount of possibilities. Essentially, you create your own person, or family, and guide them through the ups and downs of life – it's the definitive docu-soap and makes for compelling gameplay.

PUBLISHER Electronic Arts • 01753 549442

CAESAR III

PCZ #70 • 85%

★ Starting from scratch you've got to build a majestic Roman city and ensure a harmonious life for your citizens. So what? So it's utterly absorbing and probably the most addictive god sim in existence.

PUBLISHER Sierra • 0118 920 9100

SIMCITY 3000

PCZ #74 • 84%

★ Ten years on, *SimCity* remains as addictive as it ever was. Little was broken, and little was fixed. With new buildings to try out and an enhanced transport system, *SimCity 3000* is a must for old-timers and newbies alike.

PUBLISHER Maxis/EA • 01753 549442

ROLLERCOASTER TYCOON

PCZ #75 • 83%

★ Pack out your own theme park with the most fiendish rides your imagination can conjure up. From rickety wooden dippers, to *Nemesis*-style, white-knuckle gurners, *RT* is hugely addictive.

PUBLISHER Hasbro • 020 8569 1234

ONLINE ONLY

ULTIMA ONLINE

BENCHMARK
GAME**PCZ #80 • 92%**

✪ In many ways an old-school RPG, but with amazing freedom, depth and open-endedness. So addictive that *ZONE* editor Chris has sold his car, his house and his soul to finance a permanent Web connection. The best thing about *Ultima Online* is that your world is constantly changing and evolving, and it's populated by real people, just like you.

PUBLISHER Electronic Arts • 01753 549442**EVERQUEST****PCZ #80 • 85%**

✪ If you find *Ultima Online* too vast, *EverQuest* may be the online RPG for you. It's far more combat-orientated than *Ultima*, and more linear as a result. Repetitive at higher levels, but worth checking out all the same.

PUBLISHER Sony (sold at Electronic Boutique only) • 020 7428 5961**ASHERON'S CALL****PCZ #88 • 76%**

✪ The graphics and freedom to do almost anything make this title a commendable addition to the genre. However, it's a crying shame you can't kill other humans – most of the ones you meet deserve a good kicking.

PUBLISHER Microsoft • 0345 002 000**NETSTORM****PCZ #59 • 73%**

✪ A curious blend of chess, *Red Alert* and *Baron Munchausen*, *NetStorm* is also an elegant and addictive multiplayer game that works beautifully across a standard modem.

PUBLISHER Activision • 01895 456700**WARBIRDS****PCZ #70 • 72%**

✪ The original WWII online dogfighting sim and still one of the best. With more than 48 different aircraft to choose from, this should keep anyone with a passing interest in air combat very happy indeed.

PUBLISHER Interactive Magic • 01344 409399

3D ACTION/STRATEGY

HIDDEN & DANGEROUS

BENCHMARK
GAME**PCZ #79 • 91%**

✪ You don't get a second chance in a real war, and *Hidden & Dangerous* is the game that's come closest to putting you in the middle of hell on earth. From the first mission it grabs you by the balls and doesn't let up until you're dead, with a bullet in the head. As a strategic shoot 'em up, games don't get any harder, or more compelling and atmospheric.

PUBLISHER Take 2 Interactive • 01753 722900**SWAT 3****PCZ #85 • 89%**

✪ Artificial Intelligence doesn't get any better than this. Add some spectacular graphics, an ingenious command interface and edge-of-your-seat gameplay, and you've got a top title.

PUBLISHER Sierra • 0118 920 9100**BATTLEZONE 2****PCZ #84 • 87%**

✪ Stunning graphics and a winning blend of strategy and first-person action in this sequel to the highly acclaimed *Battlezone*. The fight for world domination has never looked so good.

PUBLISHER Activision • 01895 456700**ROGUE SPEAR****PCZ #84 • 86%**

✪ We loved *Rainbow Six* and although this follow-up can't match *Hidden & Dangerous* for intensity, it's a superb romp through the world of terrorism. Pick your team, kit them out and plan your missions carefully.

PUBLISHER Take 2 Interactive • 01753 722900**SPEC OPS 2****PCZ #84 • 84%**

✪ Challenging *Hidden & Dangerous* for the top spot, *Spec Ops 2* puts you in charge of a four-man green beret squad intent on staying alive and shooting the enemy in the head. Incredibly realistic, with top-notch sound.

PUBLISHER Take 2 Interactive • 01753 722900PCZONE ALL-TIME
CLASSICS**DOOM**

✪ This is the game that needs no introduction. Without *Doom* we wouldn't have had *Quake*, *Unreal Tournament* or (gulp) *Half-Life*. Every time you play a first-person shooter you should take five minutes to pay homage to the game that changed the world as we know it. *Doom*, we thank you.

**ULTIMA VII**

✪ Still the best of all the *Ultima* games, and probably the finest RPG ever seen on a PC. The graphics might be old-hat, but the gameplay certainly isn't. *Ultima VII* blends exploration and character interaction, and it's the last title in the *Ultima* series to give complete party control.

**ULTIMA UNDERWORLD**

✪ We reviewed this game back in the first issue of *PC ZONE*. It was a landmark RPG then and it's still a landmark RPG now, although the graphics obviously look a bit dated. Do we think it's the best RPG ever? Almost, but not quite. Cast your eyes up the mag a couple of inches for the answer to that question.

**DUNE II**

✪ If you know your strategy, you'll know that *Dune II* is the game that's done more than any of its rivals to define the genre as we know it today. The 2000 update was disappointing, but only because it didn't add anything new. The fact that it still plays better than many new titles is testament to its staying power.

**SENSIBLE WORLD OF SOCCER**

✪ EA's *FIFA* series might look the part, but we're convinced that *Sensible Soccer* was and is the ultimate example of gameplay over presentation. With its famous top-down view, *Sensible* offers fast frantic action that does more to replicate the real-life game than any of its predecessors.

**UFO: ENEMY UNKNOWN**

✪ This game came out of nowhere and took the world by storm. Compelling strategy, tense turn-based battles, and a myriad of research options made this the most addictive game ever on its arrival. Subsequent sequels were just as addictive, but this is the game that originally captured our hearts.

**MAGIC CARPET**

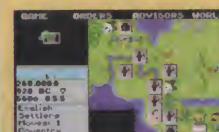
✪ Drawing gasps of amazement from everyone who saw it, Bullfrog's *Magic Carpet* was one of the most original and inventive games released in the early days of 3D. So original, in fact, that it never got the recognition it deserved. We still think the blend of action and strategy was spot-on.

**WING COMMANDER**

✪ The original space combat game spawned the first big-budget PC series. In fact, the *Wing Commander* series was so hugely successful that they went and made a film. Inevitably, this was absolute rubbish and the public stayed away in their millions. Will these people ever learn?

**TOMB RAIDER**

✪ She might be getting a bit rusty round the gills, but when Lara first bounced onto the small screen we fell in love with her instantly. 3D action adventure games haven't been the same since and at the time nothing could touch it. Do you remember your first encounter with the T-Rex?

**CIVILIZATION**

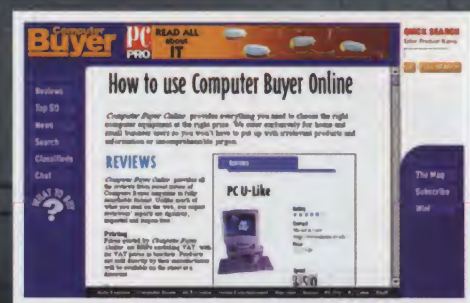
✪ The original and some say the best turn-based strategy game. When *Civilization* first appeared, it was hailed correctly as the first game that changed and evolved depending on how you played it. Recent versions have presented more of the same, but in this case that is definitely no bad thing.



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CHAT
Your technical
questions
answered
on-line

THE LIONHEAD DIARIES



We rejoin the *Black & White* development team as they come close to finalising their epic game. This month we are given a bit of an insight into the mystical world of miracles and magic spells...

★ WORDS Steve Jackson

MIRACLE WORKERS

After some six years of work, the *Black & White* game engine is nearing completion. It is a magnificent piece of coding. Even though we see it in action every day, it never ceases to amaze us when, for example, the creature stares curiously at his own reflection in water. Or when clouds drift slowly over the landscape casting shadows across the villages below. Or how the whole world gets a little darker, a little more sinister, when you inadvertently destroy a group of villagers.

Now our attention is focused on the individual features controlled by the engine. The creature animations, the in-game lives of the villagers, good-evil morphing of the landscape, 3D movement... All these features will call on the game's engine for their implementation.

As *PC ZONE* readers re-join the *Black & White* chronicles we are discussing miracles. I should explain that our views on how we refer to this feature of the game switch regularly between 'miracles' and 'magic spells'. To all intents and purposes these displays of godly power work like spells. But as they are created by a god, perhaps they should be called miracles? The debate continues... Anyway, at this particular meeting decisions are being made about exactly how the spells/miracles are implemented. We'll worry about what we actually call them later.

In *Black & White* you start the game as a rookie god, knowing only one or two spells with which to impress your villagers. The more you manage to impress them – either by helping them out or by making them fear you – the more 'belief' you will earn yourself. The more belief you have, the more mana (magical energy) you can call on to create spells. And if you do particularly impressive things in answer to their prayers, your villagers will bring new spells and spell gestures to add to your miraculous repertoire.

Up until now only the obvious spells, such as Lightning Bolt, Force Field, Heal and Create Forest, have been implemented. We have only needed to put these in place to test out the engine's spell support algorithms. A Fireball spell, for example, allows you to cast burning bolts, which are aimed and fired from the Hand of God (cursor) by shoving the mouse forwards and releasing the mouse button. The first subject under discussion at the meeting is the Hand of God itself.

We start discussing how the Hand should indicate which spell it is currently charged with. Someone suggests we might make the Hand take on an effect for whatever spell it holds ready. A burning Hand would indicate a Fireball spell ready to cast; a soft glow around the Hand might indicate a Healing spell. "It's possible," says 3D programmer Jean Claude Cottier. "But remember the Hand is only 96 x 96 pixels in size. We'll be limited in the effects we can do." Alex Evans, 3D programmer, points out: "The trouble is, the Hand exists entirely in the foreground and is independent of the game."

This is an important point. Even in real-time games the action actually progresses through a series of game turns. These game-turns might last only for a micro-second while the processor updates the game state to account for all movements and changes. This means everything in the game is tied into

this game-turn clock. Everything, that is, except the cursor, which must be independent of game turns. If this were not the case, the on-screen movements of the cursor would lag behind actual mouse movements. A side effect of this is that nothing can appear linked to the Hand. Otherwise it would have the infuriating effect of lagging behind the Hand movement as each turn is calculated. "Maybe we could get away with always putting the effect under the Hand," suggests artist Mark Healey. Peter [Molyneux] frowned: "You should be able to grasp the spell or an object like a tree and move it across the screen."

"But then we'll get a lag," says Jean-Claude. "It would work OK with..."

I don't know, a little storm cloud which just followed the Hand around.

You wouldn't notice the lag."

The engineers promise to look into the problem to see if they can come up with another solution.

The next topic is spell gestures. Sometimes the villagers reward their god with new spells. And sometimes they reveal spell gestures. A gesture is a pattern which can be drawn out on the ground by the Hand. Perhaps it might be a simple circle, an equilateral triangle or a Star of David. It has the effect of powering-up the spell's effect. This gesture system has been coded already for several patterns.

When you attempt a gesture, you draw the Hand across the ground where it leaves an ethereal trace behind. When the pattern is completed, the game checks whether or not the tracing was accurate. If not, the duff pattern disappears in a puff of smoke. But if you get it right, the trace lines lock together in the chosen pattern and the spell in the Hand becomes visibly more powerful. In this way, a basic Fireball can be powered up to fire a shotgun blast of fireballs capable of destroying a larger area. Or a Heal spell can be made to cure a group of villagers, not just one. Or a Wind spell becomes a ravaging tornado.

Artist Paul McLaughlin isn't sure how this works across different spells: "Does this mean that, say, a circle always gives a power-up from level-one effect to level-two effect on each spell?"

"No," replies Peter. "We use specific gestures linked differently for each spell to progress through the power-ups." The meeting ends with a list of spells which needed to be implemented before the next meeting in a month's time. The Heal, Lightning, Storm Cloud, Food, Shield, Wall, Priest and Skeleton Army spells are to be created so that we can see how they work with the engine. This is an extremely ambitious list for a month's work, as each spell involves a good deal of animation work, not to mention the game programming and balancing.

It will mean late nights for the programmers and artists. But this time next month, we should have the spell system in place. And we can switch our attention to the progress of *Black & White* on-line. **PCZ**



“It never ceases to amaze us when the creature stares curiously at his own reflection in water”

STEVE MARVELS AT THE *BLACK & WHITE* GAME ENGINE

Beautiful graphics...



Superb animations...



A living breathing world.



Basically, we can't wait.



ON THE CD

We regret to inform you that we've had to delay the *Daikatana* demo for a month. Only joking. Here it is and the others too

★ WORDED BY Martin Korda COMPILED BY Dan Emery

HELP!

CD trouble? Don't worry – phone our helpline and sort yourself out pronto!

CD-ROM HELP Phone ABT on 01708 250250 any weekday between 9.30am and 5pm, and Saturday from 10am to 2pm, or email pczone@abt-net.demon.co.uk. Please do NOT phone the PC ZONE office. Thanks.

BEFORE YOU DIAL... If you are calling the helpline, please take note of the following points:

- If possible, have your PC operating and near the phone when you call.
- If this is not possible, note down all relevant information – ie system type, sound card, RAM and so on – plus the nature of the fault.
- Make sure you have a pen and paper to hand when you call so you can jot down the relevant info.

MINIMUM SPECIFICATION

- You need at least a Pentium 166 with 32Mb RAM to run the software on this month's CD-ROM.
- Many of the programs on our cover CD-ROM are designed to run under Windows 95/98 and, as a result, some of them may require a Pentium 233 with 64Mb RAM to run satisfactorily. Please note that some games also require a 3D accelerator card to run.
- Use the browser and menu system to see which demos are 3D accelerator only.



DEMOS + SHAREWARE

DAIKATANA

Eidos Interactive



Yet another rare South American insect about to become extinct.

Yes it's true, and no you're not dreaming. *Daikatana* is here, and on this month's CD we bring you the world exclusive demo of John Romero's long awaited shooter.

You begin at the start of the first level, the Marsh. Armed only with an ion cannon and your fists, you must navigate your way safely through the quagmire, fending off ankle biting frogs and mutated dragon flies along the way. Don't scoff though, because even on the simplest level, it's easy to get yourself ripped apart (literally) by the mass of nasties waiting for you in the shadows. Add to this the extra hazards of crocodiles who can emerge without warning from the murky waters, and turret guns intent on filling you with lead, and you suddenly realise just how challenging *Daikatana* can be.

Daikatana requires you to have more than just sharp reactions and an accurate shot. Unlike most FPSs of this type (cast your mind back to *Doom* if you will), there's no option to save the game whenever you like. Instead, you must pick up Save Gems, which are frugally situated around the level. Deciding when to use these is an option which throws up some interesting problems. If you're low on health, you must decide whether to use your gem as soon as you get it, or risk dying by preserving it till later. Although the lack of save options can seem annoying, it does add greatly to the game's challenge.

By now it's likely that you've read our full and world exclusive review of *Daikatana* by Dave 'One Hit Wonder' Woods on page 62, and you'll be aware of our comments. Although we don't think that it's achieved its potential, we're sure that there are many of you who will enjoy the game. This demo is here to allow you to make up your own mind about it, and hopefully, along with what we've said, make a highly informed decision as to whether to buy the full version.

Controls: Mouse and keyboard

It's just a flesh wound.

The weapons are unlike any you've seen before.



Quick someone, find some Ewoks to stop that thing.



The game can be viewed from any angle.



I know I left it around here somewhere...

FORCE COMMANDER

LucasArts/Activision

It was always going to be just a matter of time until LucasArts released an RTS game based around the *Star Wars* universe. In fact, it's a real shocker it took them this long to do so. Now that the wait is over, we're giving you a chance to sample some of the action before you hand over your money for the full version of *Star Wars: Force Commander*.

The demo provides an assault mission, in which you must control the forces of the evil Empire. A briefing carefully takes you right through your goals, outlining both your primary and secondary objectives. It's then

up to you to mobilise your squadron and to infiltrate a Rebel computer complex.

You start with relatively few units, and it will take careful planning to decide how and where to deploy them. While you have objectives to complete, you must also be careful that your base is not left unguarded against guerrilla attacks. Protecting Dellis (the key man in the mission) is imperative, because if he dies it's mission over. You must also watch out for rebels emerging from canyon and mountain hideouts, intent on holding you up and taking out a few of your men.

With a fully 3D game world, *Force Commander* can be viewed from just about any angle. Zoom in close and watch the detailed battles unfolding between your men and the rebels. Once you get the hang of the interface and work out how to spread your troops over the map, you'll soon be crushing the Rebel's pitiful little band.

Just don't let yourself get too immersed in the role, or you could end up socialising with men who wear strange black helmets and talk about their Master all the time. You have been warned.

Controls: Mouse and keyboard

Ha ha ha ha ha ha.



LEMMINGS REVOLUTION

Take 2 Interactive

For those of you who missed them the first time around, those suicidal rodents are making a comeback with *Lemmings Revolution*, a title with a cunning twist. Each level is now in 3D (revolution of design) and can be spun around when you guide the lemmings off screen, to reveal the other part of the playing area, or should I say playing volume (revolution as in turn). Now that's inspired.

Newcomers and veterans alike will find loads to entertain themselves within this demo. There are hours of brain teasing fun to be had, building staircases to breach the gaps, turning your unsuspecting lemmings into kamikaze bombers, or just watching them fall randomly to their deaths. What's more, there's still the option to nuke the lot of them if you happen to be feeling particularly vindictive. Now that's what we call fun.

Controls: Mouse

DOGS OF WAR

Take 2 Interactive

Our second helping of RTS action comes in the form of Take 2's *Dogs Of War*. Set in the future, the story bares several similarities to *Starship Troopers*, with strange alien creatures threatening humans and an unhealthy public interest in watching war on TV (which is a bit like nowadays really).

Dogs Of War features a tutorial, narrated by none other than Craig 'I must be a crraaaaazy guy 'cos I'm always talking about lager' Charles. He leads you through all of the game's intricacies, and we'd recommend that you go through this before attempting to play it.

When you've come to grips with the controls, you can try your tactical skills in a real combat situation. Eliminate all enemy units and capture Southford Bridge in order to complete the mission. Your task will be made harder by the enemy's ability to launch long range ground-to-ground and ground-to-air attacks. You've also got less firepower than your foe, so you're going to have to use guile if want to succeed. A head-on attack will usually end in a heavy defeat. Working out your units' strengths and the enemy's weaknesses are also major factors in gaining the advantage.

With lots of high speed action, excellent explosions and pounding sound and music, you'll have to act fast and think even quicker if you want to have any chance of succeeding, but with a man such as Craig Charles teaching you how it's done, you've surely got nothing at all to fear.

Controls: Mouse and keyboard



Zoom in close to watch the action.



A cow accidentally treads on a mine.



Mission complete by capturing the bridge.

ON THE CD ONLINE

Make the net a little more accessible with these handy utilities

Gamespy 3D v2.19

Fire it up and it'll find the fastest servers playing all your favourite games.

Neotrace 2.12a

Neotrace is a high-speed graphical traceroute with the integrated whois and ping.

PingTool 2.6a

PingTool helps you find the best online game servers on the Internet.

DUN Manager 2.0d (New Version)

Simplify and enhance Dial-Up Networking and Remote Access Services.

FTP Explorer 1.0010

Explorer-style FTP service.

GetRight 4.2 (New Version)

For salvaging broken downloads and lots more.

MIRC 5.7

The latest version of the Internet Relay Chat software.

Mplayer

Excellent free online gaming software.

Kali 2.0 (New Version)

Useful client software for playing games over the Internet.

ICQ2000a build 3140 (New Version)

The world's best Internet and online chat package.

Roger Wilco Mk1.1a

A virtual walkie-talkie application that runs alongside your favourite multiplayer games.

Datum Online

Find your next job online with the help of Datum Online.

ON THE CD PATCHES

No, not the things pirates wear over their eyes, but the things you put on your computer to make your fave games work better

Airport Inc v1.1

Codename Eagle v1.33

Demolition Racer: Official Patch

Duke Nukem 3D Atomic Edition v1.5

Final Fantasy VIII v 1.2

Final Fantasy VIII v 1.2 For

GeForce Users.

Homeworld v1.05

Imperium Galactica 2 'Kra' Hen

message bug' Fix

Jane's F/A-18

Majesty Update 2

Messiah 0.1 Patch

MiG Alley v1.23

MindRover v1.02

MindRover v1.05

Motocross 2000 v1.04

NASCAR Legends v1.2.0.4

NASCAR Racing 3 v1.2.0.4

Need For Speed: High Stakes v4.44

Nox v1.1

Rally Championship 2000 v5.29.0

Revenant v1.21

Rocky Mountain Trophy Hunter

2 v1.01

Rollcage Stage II v1.0a

Sammy Sosa High Heat Baseball

2001 v1.1

The Settlers III v1.38 to v1.59

The Settlers III v1.50+ to v1.58

The Sims

Soldier Of Fortune v1.04 Beta Patch

Star Trek - Armada Beta

Swedish Touring Car Championship

v1.32

Tachyon: The Fringe

Thief II: The Metal Age v1.18

UEFA Champions League

ON THE CD UTILITIES

Install these and make your hard disk more accessible, plus some fun places to go to

WinZip 8.0 (New Version)

Windows 95 and NT version of WinZip.

ExDesk 1.8

Saves the position of your Desktop shortcuts and folders.

Power Toys

Useful add-ons for your Desktop.

TreeSize Professional v2.31

(New Version)

A powerful and flexible hard disk space manager.

Adobe Acrobat Reader 4.05

Readers for documents distributed in Adobe format.

HyperSnap-DX Pro 3.55.00

Screen-capture even in DirectX/Direct3D or 3dfx Glide modes.

SciTech Display Doctor v6.53

The latest release of the universal graphics card utility.

Windows Media Player

Play the Web's coolest audio and video.

ON THE CD EDITORIAL

With all these tips, solutions, rolling demos and updates, we are really spoiling you, no?

Tips And Solutions

Handy hints and top tips on all your fave games. Well, most of them.

Championship Manager 99/00 Update (New Version)

The latest transfers, updates and all the rest.

Q3Radiant Build 197

Please see PC ZONE #90 for more info.

Hotshots: Flashpoint

Is this the game set to beat *Hidden & Dangerous*?

Quake III Demos

Install these demos to see how the best players in the world fight it out on *Quake III*. See page 36 for details on the recent professional tournament in Dallas, Texas.



A yellow card for a Leeds Utd player. Well that /s unusual.

EURO LEAGUE FOOTBALL

Dinamic Multimedia

Football is all the rage at the moment, either that or rage is all of football. Either way, the game's been inspiring shed loads of footy management sims over the last year, and here's a chance for you to sample one of them, *Euro League Football*.

This demo offers you a choice of managing either Tottenham or Everton (which is bad news for Arsenal and Liverpool fans), but the full game provides choices from all of the leagues in England, Spain, France, Germany and Italy.

As with all games of this kind, it's up to you to prove that you can do the job better than the real life managers. To accomplish this you must lead your team through training sessions and allocate them individual tasks to improve their game. Once you've shown them who's in charge, select your team and tactics and watch them do you proud or humiliate you on the pitch. Be careful to keep an eye on your finances as well, otherwise you'll lose your job faster than an underachieving Italian coach.

Controls: Mouse



Those ants really look a lot like football players from here.



Rivaldo and co ponder yet another comeback attempt.



Oi mate, your tank's on fire.

GUNSHIP!

Hasbro

Gunship! didn't exactly get a favourable review when we featured it in the last issue (49 per cent), but underneath the bugs is a damn fine game trying to get out, and here's your chance to experience the action for yourself. It's visible just how good it could have been, and how great any similar future title promises to be.

There are three modes of play: action, average and simulation. Choose from four different skill levels, select the realism and then arm your plane. In Single Battle mode you can either go for an all out action game, or a mission in Simulation mode called Men of Harlech. Despite its faults, the dog fighting is intense and will have you throwing your helicopter around as you desperately try to get missile lock on an elusive target. Wow, look at that, a whole two paragraphs on a helicopter game and not a single chopper joke to be seen anywhere. Miracles never cease.

Controls: Joystick and keys



EXTENDED PLAY

Loads and loads and loads and loads and loads and loads and loads of *FreeSpace 2* add-ons. Go to page 154 where Phil Wand tells you all about them.



"The Clip! video reviews are a great idea!"



"I really liked the exclusive Show report ... more please!"

watch
enjoy
buy >>>

EXTENDED PLAY

Give *FreeSpace 2* a good going over with more ships, planets and editing utilities. Plus the awesome *Quake III Fortress* mod

★ WORDS Phil Wand

TRY IT YOURSELF



On this month's cover CD we've got all the official patches, bug fixes, utilities and map editors we could find, including all the ones mentioned in these pages. To track them down, use the CD browser to go to the Patches section. All the patches are listed with a brief description and any relevant documentation. Make sure you read any associated README files for information on how to install individual patches. For further help, turn to our CD pages, starting on page 150.

“Powerful thrusters and its light weight make the Scorpion a total bastard to aim at and shoot. Like the Anubis they rely on safety in numbers”



For space action nothing beats *FreeSpace 2*.



New ships for *FreeSpace 2* are always welcome.

Freespace 2

In the space shoot 'em ups Supertest in the April issue, Steve Hill said *FreeSpace 2* was “a cross between *Battlestar Galactica* and *Buck Rogers*”. And, um, well, it is. But that's no bad thing, honest. Up against its rival titles, the Supertest team concluded that the game was ‘a wholly exciting middle ground between *X-Wing Alliance* and *X – Beyond The Frontier*’, and was without doubt the best space combat sim on offer. This is thanks to its boggling, panoptic space battles straight out of a George Lucas flick, sewn together by a vaguely convincing storyline.

And it's not just us. The title has been heaped with kudos from all around the globe and Volition's trophy cabinet is positively heaving. The only downside is that it has the ability of one of its predecessors, *Descent*, to make players and bystanders heave in

unison – it's really not for people prone to motion sickness.

SHIPS

New craft for the *FreeSpace 2* main engine.

★ GTF APOLLO (GTF_Apollo.zip)

Description: The Apollo is found in most space ports – it's the Ford Fiesta of the GTA (Galactic Terrain Alliance) fighter world. Its versatility enables it to play a successful role in many missions. The downside is its low weapon compatibility. And it looks crap.

Rating: ★★☆☆

★ GTB ATHENA (GTB_Athena.zip)

Description: Diminutive bomber that often gets confused for a fighter, the Athena carries a small payload of bantam-weight bombs and various types of missiles. Thanks to its agility, tough shielding and thick hull, it makes a good dogfighter, but was designed for hit-and-run bombing.

Rating: ★★☆☆

★ GTFR CHRONOS

Description: A big girly scooter thing that looks like you should sit astride it rather than in it. It's actually a civilian freighter turned military with all the agility of an Electrolux freezer. That said, it's as tough as old boots and can take a severe pounding.

Rating: ★★☆☆

★ GVF ANUBIS

Description: The Anubis is small, weak and a bit of a sissy. But they're easy and cheap to manufacture in bulk, and are thus often found swarming together in distressingly large clusters. Still, the craft has no afterburners and crap weaponry, so unless they appear in overwhelming numbers, stifle a yawn.

Rating: ★★☆☆

★ GVB AMUN (GVB_Amun.zip)

Description: After snapping around galaxies in a fighter, it's actually quite refreshing to leap into a flying behemoth like the Amun. It's a monumentally heavy

bomber with a payload capable of laying out an Orion-class destroyer in a single run. As with most imposing craft, the designers were very careful to build in a flaw – why do they do that? – by making it glacially slow and therefore a sitting target each time it gets off the ground.

Rating: ★☆☆☆

★ GTF VALKYRIE

(GTF_Valkyrie.zip)



① GTF Valkyrie: as fast as we don't know what.

Description: Based around the Angel Scout seen in the original *FreeSpace*, the Valkyrie is a supreme interceptor fighter and reconnaissance craft. Extra power comes from extra engines, giving it an impressive turn of speed – it's the fastest and most manoeuvrable hunk of metal in the GTA. Downsides are its small payload and weak hull.

Rating: ★★★★★

★ SB SHAITAN (SB_Shaitan.zip)

Description: The Shaitan bomber comes with a tougher hull and slightly more powerful shields than its G* counterparts, but its payload is rather less.

Rating: ★★☆☆

★ SF SCORPION

(SF_Scorpion.zip)



① SF Scorpion: needs more bombs, but shields well.

Description: Commonly regarded as the top Shivan fighter, and with a macho name to match, the

Scorpion is little more than a fast, furious scout ship with beefed-up weaponry systems. Powerful manoeuvring thrusters and its light weight make them a total bastard to aim at and shoot. Like the Anubis they rely on safety in numbers.

Rating: ★★☆☆

FRED2 ADDONS

These bolt-on packs add new graphics to *FRED2*'s background editor. Unzip all .PCX files to the *FreeSpace 2* data effects directory (commonly C:\FREESPACE2\DATA\EFFECTS). Unzip all .TBL files to the data tables directory (commonly C:\FREESPACE2\DATA\TABLES).

★ PLANETS SET 1

(fs2planets.zip)

Description: A total of 13 new planets for use in *FreeSpace 2* missions and campaigns.

Rating: ★★★★★

★ HAMOON (hamoon.zip)

Description: Taken from the wickedly silly animated series *The Tick*, Hamoon is for fun only.

Rating: ★★☆☆

TOOLS

Editors and utilities for *FreeSpace 2*.

★ COB2FS2 (c2fs2-1.zip)

Description: If you've ever wondered how to create custom ships, this little tool will convert a *trueSpace* .COB or .SCN file into a *FreeSpace 2* polymodel – *trueSpace* is a 3D graphics and animation program often used to design and render game objects such as the polygonal craft in *FreeSpace 2*. See our **Bookmarks** section for more details.

Rating: ★★★★★

★ FS2VIEW (fs2v05.zip)

Description: A graphical viewer that enables you to look at 3D renders of all polymodel shapes used within the *FreeSpace 2* graphics engine. Requires OpenGL drivers. It was written and tested on Windows 98, but it

worked fine on our Windows NT 4 SP6 test machine.

Rating: ★★☆☆

★ MISSION MANAGER v2

(fsmm2-wa1.zip)

Description: A great way to arrange all your various missions. As an added bonus, the utility has a *FreeSpace* and *FreeSpace 2* .POF editor integrated into its interface. This allows you to amend or add subsystems on both the original and homebrew *FreeSpace* models. The tool is still in alpha, but works a treat.

Rating: ★★★★★

★ POF TO COB CONVERTER

(pof2cob09.zip)

Description: Quick and dirty utility to convert *FreeSpace* .POF files into *trueSpace* .COB files.

Rating: ★★★★★

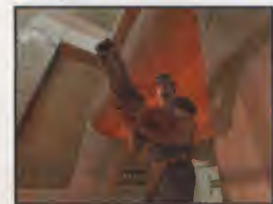
QUAKE III: FORTRESS

Last month's Online Diary introduced the *QIII* mod for *Quake III* together with some of the player classes. Now Extended Play takes on the mantle with an in-depth look at what could become the most popular *Quake* variation yet.

Those who've played the original *Team Fortress* for *Quake*, or *Team Fortress Classic* and *Counter-Strike* mods for *Half-Life*, should be used to the idea of co-operative play against an opposing team. However, the idea of eight grenade types, ten classes, 16 weapons and five game variations is all a bit baffling to newbies who are used to running around deathmatch arenas as a space marine. So for those of you 'in the know', sit back and be patient. You can download it from the *PC ZONE* website, and hopefully it'll be on next month's cover disc.

THE CLASSES

★ RECON



➔ The team flag runner.

Description: The Recon class is fast and agile and is used primarily for flag running because of his ability to dodge bullets. He's also excellent to send into the middle of a melee as he's capable of running rings round every other class. The downside of all that speed is little armour and weak offensive weaponry.

TF Equivalent: Scout

Weapons: Nailgun, Single-Barrel Shotgun

Grenades: Stun, Flashbang

★ PARAMEDIC



➔ Doctorin' the Fortress.

Description: The Paramedic is the only class feared by all others. Armed with a syringe that infects opposing troops with a nasty, communicable disease, avoid this chap at all costs. He's also able to heal his team-mates and perform acrobatics with stun grenade jumps.

TF Equivalent: Medic

Weapons: Single-Barrel Shotgun, Double-Barrel Shotgun, Super Nailgun

Grenades: Hand, Stun

★ GRENADE LAUNCHER

Description: Able to fling grenades from his launcher, set pipebombs for incoming enemy units and set a destructive HE Charge, the Grenadier is mainly used to clear heavily defended rooms and guard dropped flags.

TF Equivalent: Demolition Man

Weapons: Gauntlet, Single-Barrel Shotgun, Grenade Launcher, Pipebomb Launcher

Grenades: Hand, Cluster

★ SOLDIER



➔ Stalwart in both offence and defence.

Description: Soldiers are worthy classes at the front line and at the back guarding the flag. They're none too quick, but at the same time not slow – and their rockets tear chunks from enemy units.

TF Equivalent: Soldier

Weapons: Single-Barrel Shotgun, Double-Barrel Shotgun, RPG

Grenades: Hand, Nailbomb

★ FLAMETROOPER

Description: Often considered the lamest class of all, the Flametrooper is useful in both offensive and defensive positions. When on the attack, his flamethrower sets people alight and restricts their vision. When falling back, his napalm grenades

are good for slowing anyone foolish enough to follow.

TF Equivalent: Pyro

Weapons: Gauntlet, Single-Barrel Shotgun, Flamethrower, Napalm Launcher

Grenades: Hand, Napalm

★ SNIPER

Description: This guy sits in dark corners or atop balconies and takes aim at incoming troops on the other side of the map. One shot and they're dead – so keep your head down in open areas. Almost as weak as the scout, so an easy target for soldiers.

TF Equivalent: Sniper

Weapons: Nailgun, Rifle

Grenades: Hand, Flashbang

★ MINIGUNNER

Description: Basically, this fella is a truck with a rapid-firing machine gun bolted to its front bumper. Although he is slow and cumbersome, and often the choice of newbies, the phenomenal rate of the minigun cuts most units to shreds in seconds. Beware!

TF Equivalent: Heavy Weapons (HW) Guy

Weapons: Gauntlet, Single-Barrel Shotgun, Double-Barrel Shotgun, Minigun

Grenades: Hand, Cluster

★ AGENT

Description: The agent is able to dress in the enemy's colour or use invisibility to infiltrate the opposing team's base. While he gives the game away when he pulls the trigger, he's able to lob grenades and remain undercover.

TF Equivalent: Spy

Weapons: Combat Knife, Nailgun, Double-Barrel Shotgun, Dart Gun

Grenades: Hand, Hallucinogenic

★ ENGINEER



➔ Build guns to protect your HQ and flag.

Description: Able to restock friendly units and build and service sentry guns, the Engineer is the champion of defence. But he's lightly armoured, so will often be found with a soldier in tow – a deadly combination for any inbound enemy units.

TF Equivalent: Engineer

Weapons: Wrench, Double-Barrel Shotgun, Railgun

Grenades: Hand, Pulse

THE WEAPONS

★ SYRINGE

Description: Used to infect enemy players with a deadly virus, and to replenish the health of wounded team-mates.

Carried By: Paramedic

★ WRENCH

Description: Tend refill stations, sentry guns and team-mates low on armour.

Carried By: Engineer

★ SINGLE-BARREL SHOTGUN

Description: This is the one weapon *nobody* uses. Kill yourself instead.

Carried By: Recon, Soldier, Grenadier, Paramedic, Minigunner, Flametrooper

★ DOUBLE-BARREL SHOTGUN

Description: Useful in most situations as a backup.

Carried By: Soldier, Paramedic, Minigunner, Agent, Engineer

★ NAILGUN

Description: Retains 100 per cent accuracy over long distances. Useful.

Carried By: Recon, Agent, Sniper

★ SUPER NAILGUN

Description: Same as the Nailgun, but twice as lethal.

Carried By: Paramedic

★ RAILGUN

Description: Great for long-distance sniping, railgun projectiles are really rather deadly.

Carried By: Engineer

★ DART GUN

Description: Used to tranquillise enemy troops.

Carried By: Agent

★ RIFLE

Description: Totally accurate, horribly messy and perfect for that one-shot kill.

Carried By: Sniper

★ FLAMETHROWER

Description: Pumps out pressurised napalm gel and is only for close combat.

Carried By: Flametrooper

★ NAPALM LAUNCHER

Description: Looks and feels like the RPG, but comes with flame-tipped ammo.

Carried By: Flametrooper

★ ROCKET LAUNCHER

Description: Great close-combat weapon and good for keeping enemy heads ducked.

Carried By: Soldier

★ GRENADE LAUNCHER

Description: Launches six grenades in close succession that explode on impact. Extremely nasty.

Carried By: Grenadier

★ PIPEBOMB LAUNCHER

Description: Same as above, but with the detonation triggered by the user.

Carried By: Grenadier

★ MINIGUN

Description: Awesome. Tears anything to pieces, but slow to spin up.

Carried By: Minigunner

THE GRENADES

★ HAND

Description: Standard issue grenade. Goes bang and hurts.

TF Equivalent: Standard Hand Grenade

Carried By: All bar Recon

★ STUN

Description: Causes dizziness. Can also be used for concussion style jumps.

TF Equivalent: Concussion Grenade

Carried By: Paramedic, Recon

★ FLASHBANG

Description: Inflicts limited damage, but causes temporary loss of vision.

TF Equivalent: None, although seen in *Counter-Strike*

Carried By: Sniper, Recon

★ CLUSTER BOMB

Description: Explodes into clusters – which then also explode. Very noisy.

TF Equivalent: MIRV

Carried By: Minigunner, Grenadier

★ NAILBOMB

Description: Fizzes away unleashing a steady stream of nail spikes.

TF Equivalent: Nail Grenade

Carried By: Soldier

★ GAS

Description: Emits a gas which sends your opponents to trip-out city.

TF Equivalent: Hallucination Gas Grenade

Carried By: Agent

★ PULSE

Description: Causes ammo to detonate – and of course anyone unfortunate enough to be carrying it.

TF Equivalent: Electro-Magnetic Pulse (EMP)

Carried By: Engineer

WHAT'S ON YOUR HARD DRIVE?

We sent our intrepid reporter to find out what's keeping you off the streets

★ **VENUE:** Game, Tunbridge Wells **INTERROGATOR:** Martin Korda



MARTIN BALLAN
Computer Programmer, 38

What's on your hard drive?

"Grand Theft Auto, Tiberian Sun and Quake III."

What did you think of Tiberian Sun?

"I found it a lot harder than the original."

Would you buy another C&C game if it came out?

"I'd have to consider it carefully, they're all a bit too similar, and there are plenty of other games like it to choose from."

Ah, that's the beauty of cloning for you.



ANTHONY NICHOLL
Warehouse Manager, 35

What's on your hard drive?

"Adventure games, such as The Journeyman Project 2 and 3."

What are you looking forward to having on your hard drive?

"I've actually got about 56 adventure games at home, but I haven't played half of them yet."

Why, are you stocking up in case there's a war or something and your stuck inside?

"No, I've only got a P133, so I'm trying to hoard games that still run on it."



JAMIE LAWRENCE AND SEAN WISEMAN

Students, both 14

What's on your hard drives?

"FIFA 99 and Championship Manager 98/99."

What games are you looking forward to playing?

"New FIFA games are good."

Do you think the next FIFA game will be better still?

"More of the same probably."

But you'll still buy it?

"Yeah."

There really is one born every minute, or two in this case.



CARL HOPKINS
Student, 13

What's on your hard drive?

"Need For Speed III: Hot Pursuit."

What are you looking forward to having on your hard drive?

"Thief II."

Have you ever stolen a real car?

"Ha ha ha, no."

Do you live out your delinquent fantasies through games then?

"Yeah, that's right, it's a good way of keeping me off the streets – ha ha ha. Actually, I just like tense games which allow you to do all the things you know you can't do in real life."



NICHOLE WHITNALL
Student, 14

What's on your hard drive?

"Virtual Springfield."

What are you looking forward to having on your hard drive?

"Anything that surprises me by being original."

If you could make a totally original game, what would it be like?

"A game where you can create and control your own community of cartoony characters, like in god games, but one that has adventure elements, too."



JONATHAN WEST
Works in Insurance, 22

What's on your hard drive?

"Flight Sim 2000."

Do you think these games could be improved if you had things like hijackings?

"Yeah, and optional guns and stuff."

Exactly, then you could also have irate customers who beat up your cabin crew, and people doing 'it' in first class? Then you'd have to sort them out...

"Two games in one – a great idea. It would certainly make flight sims a lot more exciting."



ALAN CARTER
Student, 16

What's on your hard drive?

"Emulators, I do a lot of TCs of Atari ST games. I've also got loads of Taito arcade games."

What are you looking forward to having on your hard drive?

"Any good new arcade puzzle games. Also anything by LucasArts."

So you're not into games with mass carnage and stuff?

"Not particularly, I don't see their appeal. I prefer my games to be action packed rather than violent."



CLAIRE CARTER
Student, 14

What's on your hard drive?

"My brother's filled it up with loads of Taito games."

What kind of games are you into then?

"Beat 'em ups and shoot 'em ups."

So, this stereotype about girls playing Barbie games is a lie?

"It is. Me and my mates all hate Barbie, and play Quake instead."

How about a game where you blow the heads off Barbie?

"Yes, that would definitely be a good seller."



JAMES REALFF
Student, 21

What's on your hard drive?

"Tomb Raider: The Last Revelation and Hidden & Dangerous."

What are you looking forward to having on your hard drive?

"Shogun: Total War. I can't wait to play it as I'm very interested in the history aspect of the game, because I'm studying that period at the moment."

If it wasn't set in real-life history, would you still play it?

"Yes, as it would still be fun, but maybe not quite as interesting."



JOE O'MALLEY
Student, 14

What's on your hard drive?

"Half-Life and C&C: Tiberian Sun."

What are you looking forward to having on your hard drive?

"I'd like to get Force Commander, but I haven't got the money. Also Commandos 2."

So, do you reckon you'll be a commando yourself one day?

"I don't think I'm the type. I want to go travelling when I finish school. After that I'd quite like to go into acting. You never know, one day I may even get to act in a computer game."

Tachyon The Fringe



Caught in the middle of a violent conflict, your ability to survive will depend on your piloting skills and combat savvy as a mercenary space fighter.



excessive choice of games

Virgin

megastores

DANGEROUSLY ENTERTAINING



THE WORLD ACCORDING TO...

“The whole flight sim genre has been changing, a lot of games are getting more ‘hardcore’ and appealing to smaller and smaller markets”

KEVIN BEZANT, ON THE EVOLVING NATURE OF FLIGHT SIMS



RAZORWORKS

Paul Presley takes off with the lads from Razorworks to find out where their next landing will be...

The four men in charge of the surprisingly small team at Razorworks are no strangers to the world of hardcore flight sims. Kevin Bezant, Todd Gibbs, Dave Proctor and Matt Smith all made their names at veteran UK simulation specialist Digital Integration, where they worked on titles such as *Tornado*, *Apache Longbow* and *Hind*.

Eager to pursue their own agenda however, the foursome left DI two and a half years ago to set up their own studio, Razorworks. Their first title, *Apache Havoc*, was a surprise hit and reawakened interest in the neglected helicopter genre. Their latest effort, *Comanche Hukum*, is being hailed as one of the finest sims to hit the streets in a long time. We caught up with the Oxford-based team as they contemplate the future.

Where is the flight sim genre going?

Kevin: The whole flight sim genre has been

changing over the last few years and lots of games have been getting more and more ‘hardcore’ and appealing to a smaller and smaller market. I don’t think people are necessarily going to stop developing flight sims, but they’ll be developing them in a different way, taking the genre somewhere else.

What sort of places?

Kevin: Well, like the PlayStation 2. You wouldn’t be talking about doing something like *Comanche Hukum* on the PlayStation 2, because it’s just too big and the controls are too complex. You’d have to design the game to fit the machine and have something more action-oriented as opposed to aiming for the levels of realism we have been aiming for. Something more like a traditional PlayStation-style game.

Todd: At the moment, it seems as though developers have been listening to customers a bit too much, so that rather than just focusing on what

their game is, they’re being driven to put more and more features into them. Any developer trying to compete now just takes the benchmark game and tries to copy it on every different level. If you don’t the customer will just say, “Well this has got such a feature and that hasn’t.”

Matt: I think the indication is that most people might not want a ‘career’ in the Forces anymore, but want something more like *Top Gun*. Games, such as *Ace Combat* by Namco and so on.

Todd: You almost do have to make a stand and say we’re not going to do any really hardcore stuff anymore, but do instead what we as developers want to do.

Kevin: The other reason why sims have become more hardcore is because the PC’s hardware has become capable of supporting those kind of games. Around five or ten years ago we were always developing the game to fit onto the machine, while now it’s no longer a problem.



← *Comanche Hokum* probably has better graphics than most military training simulators. It's just been a natural progression really.

Are you saying we're coming to the end of the hardcore simulation genre?

Kevin: That really depends on other publishers and what they want to do. From our point of view we're moving away from them because we want to do something different. With *Apache Havoc* and *Comanche Hokum* we feel we've done what we set out to do – make what's probably the best helicopter sim out there. So we want to try something different now, get into other genres and try something new. Remember we've been doing flight sims now for... years! Fortunately, our skills and technical abilities will easily transfer to other genres and we should easily be able to compete in whatever type of genre we go into.

Heading up the team is Digital Integration veteran Kevin Bezant.



How has the recent wave of redundancies and cancellations in the flight sim genre affected you?

Matt: It's a sign of the times. It is quite scary when it happens to a well established genre, one that's been around for years and there are a lot of questions as to why it's happening and what you can do about it. I don't think people are particularly bored of military hardware, more what sort of level you take it to. The trend may swing back towards flight sims again, who knows? It might all turn around again. The consoles are starting to get a few flight sim style games being made for them. The

thing about games such as *Ace Combat 3* is that they're neither hardcore flight sims or cheap arcade games, but are actually a good mixture of the two.

It sounds as though you have all grown a little bored of hardcore flight sims...

Dave: We've been looking at the competition for quite a while – you always have to keep an eye on them – and what we've found is that we're really only competing with our last product [*Apache Havoc*]. The challenge for Razorworks now is to do something else. We always had in mind to do

“With *Apache Havoc* and *Comanche Hokum* we feel we've done what we set out to do – make what's probably the best helicopter sim out there”

flight sims as our core development, but to still try to work on some original concepts along the way. **Todd:** As to whether flight sims are dead or not, I do think they have been seriously damaged. The market is like a ship that's run aground almost. It's having to be pulled off and towed in another direction.

Where is this going to leave the hardcore flight sim crowd?

Matt: Playing *Comanche Hokum*. (Laughs)

The PlayStation 2 gets mentioned a lot by the team and a Dreamcast set up on a nearby table is provoking a lot of interest among other members of the team, but Kevin is quick to point out they will still be developing for the PC at the same time. The trick is going to be finding a project that works equally well across both platforms.

CRASH AND BURN

A few months ago we questioned the nature of realism in computer games (Comment, PCZ #88). Who better to take it up with than these guys?

How much further can you take the realism in flight sims?

Kevin: Oh, we can keep going and going. Take the avionics for instance. You can just get so bogged down in the micro-detail that it's not a game anymore. With the radar displays and so on, if we had the real-life manuals we could implement the whole thing. But would that make for a better

game? How many people would actually be able to use them?

I expect the ever shrinking hardcore crowd would enjoy it.

Kevin: It's a really tricky balance. Take someone such as NovaLogic, for instance. They've never been afraid to put out a game that's not 'hardcore', as it were.

What about flight models? Surely I shouldn't be able to fly a *Comanche* in

real life, yet somehow I feel as though, if pushed, I might just be able to manage it.

Kevin: There isn't the fear of hitting the ground though, is there? That makes a difference. There are sensations you just can't simulate. A friend of mine has been in the back of a fast combat aircraft and it really shakes you up the first time you're in there. You'll never be able to achieve that in a flight sim. You'd probably piss blood for two days as well.

Let's go through some of the competitors. What do you think of their products?

Kevin: I really liked *Delta Force* actually, it just really appealed to me. It was just easy to pick up and play. I wasn't too worried about whether the bullets dropped at 500 metres or anything, I just wanted to go around shooting things. Whatever they did to *Delta Force 2* though, just didn't work.

How about the big one for you guys – *Gunship*!

Todd: We've seen it, although we haven't really had a chance to play with a copy as such. We've read some of the comments on the newsgroups though.

Kevin: They're working to a different agenda to us. I mean it's been designed to work alongside that tank game hasn't it? It looks pretty and everything, but the worlds are tiny.

Matt: It's a different approach really. It increases choice though, doesn't it. With two or three out at a similar time, if you ever wanted to buy a helicopter sim, now is the best time.



Matt Smith researches the next generation of military hardware.



Even though Razorworks is a small team it has grand ambitions.



Attention to detail is everything with these lads.



The whole Razorworks flight crew.

You seem to focus slightly more on helicopters than jets. Why is that?

Kevin: Well at DI we did the *Apache* sim simply because we'd just spent three and a half years working on *Tornado* and we needed to do something different. I prefer helicopter sims myself, simply because everything's not just a blur going by at 600 knots.

Todd: Also, at the time we started *Apache Havoc* the fixed-wing market had been taken so far down the line that you would have had to implement every single gadget on a plane just to compete – sort of where we are now with helicopters. It was an easier... no, not easier... a more attractive approach.

Dave: Graphically you get more of a chance to show off the engine with a helicopter sim rather than a jet. Because you're a lot closer to the action the detail is more apparent, cities have high population densities and big buildings and so on.

It's also a hell of a lot harder to get right though, isn't it?

Dave: Absolutely.

Kevin: It's more of a challenge. But it was more fun to do *Apache Havoc* the way we did rather than just to have copied what we did at DI. We had to reinvent ourselves basically to do that.

Todd: It was a really good challenge to try and do free-form terrain rather than just flattened texture-maps.

Kevin: I don't know why it is though that if you do a helicopter sim now you're almost expected to do more than one helicopter, whereas with aircraft it's usually just one or the other.

You've only yourselves to blame on that one.

Kevin: True, true (Laughs).

Todd: It just confirms that developers all look at each other's games and start working to checklists. We did two helicopters, so they have to do three or four.

Matt: To do them to the same level though is a hell of a lot of work.

BLIGHTED BLIGHTY

Odd as it may seem, the UK appears to have a higher percentage of simulation developers than the US. High profile casualties such as MicroProse and Interactive Magic have left the genre depleted of American talent.

What differences do you notice between the US and UK simulation markets?

Todd: Americans tend to like things a lot more 'in

your face', a lot more obvious.

Kevin: We sometimes tend to worry more about the localisation aspects of the game than the design aspects. There was a lot more briefing text added to *Comanche Hokum* after a German journalist complained that he didn't really have too much of a clue as to what he was supposed to be doing.

Todd: You try to create something that's acceptable to everyone, but you have to be careful not to get too carried away with everyone's suggestions.

Kevin: At the end of the day we've only got a finite number of resources with which to develop the game. It's a bit of a juggling act and you can't do everything. A lot of people were asking us if we could upgrade the *Apache Havoc* cockpits to the same standard as those in *Comanche Hokum*. Well, yes we can, but we simply don't have the time. To get them to that kind of quality would take three to six months and whatever time and resources we were stealing to improve *Apache Havoc* would mean more features that would be lost from *Comanche Hokum*. You have to balance things as best as you can.

Todd: We certainly listened to people a lot more on *Comanche Hokum* than in any other game. We got a lot of feedback following *Apache Havoc*.

Dave: We'd gone down a certain path with *Apache* and it gave us a good design base for *Comanche*. We didn't change route on the dynamic campaigns, we kept them going, which gave us a strong base.

What about the whole dynamic campaign versus scripted mission argument?

Matt: It's an interesting one.

Todd: There are all sorts of different arguments. People tend to change their minds over time as well, based on playing games that work in different ways. They can get very opinionated on that one.

Dave: It was right for us to continue along the dynamic path, definitely.

Kevin: Again, it's down to how you use the resources. We'd rather put time in to writing the AI than scripting missions. There's nothing wrong with scripted missions, it's just not the way we wanted to go.

Is the Enemy Engaged engine something you're going to continue with?

Matt: (Cagily) Hmm, who knows?

Dave: Nothing's been ruled out yet. We've only just gone to market with it, so it'll come down to who's buying what effectively.

Todd: If it sells one copy then no. (Laughs)

Matt: Unless it's a very expensive copy.

Todd: If it sells we probably will do another.

It'd be a shame to come this close to an integrated battlefield system and then drop it. Hasn't that kind of engine been the holy grail for simulation designers for a while?

Todd: I think opening up the map screen and the interface lit up a few light bulbs and got people thinking that it could well be a hub for something else. People can see the potential. So yeah, we're investigating that and all the multiplayer options.

Kevin: We're always getting a lot of ideas thrown at us as to what we should do next – A-10 Vs Frogfoot, Blackhawk Vs Hind, and so on – but we have to think it through a lot more than that, rather than just say, "Wouldn't it be a good idea if...?"



Lead artist Matt Smith – the chap who does the drawings.

Matt: It'll mean another year and a half of our lives after all.

The flight sim genre has been going through a turbulent period lately, and although they wouldn't say too much about their future, you are left with the distinct impression that Razorworks' next title might be something entirely different. At the same time, their enthusiasm for the genre is evident. While hitching a lift back to the town centre of Oxford with a couple of the guys, they talk excitedly about which sim produced the best raindrop effects and how pleased they were when an RAF pilot told them *Comanche's* flight model felt spot on. Their next title may not be a flight sim, but somehow you can't see them staying away from the genre for too long. [W]

TEAM TALK



It's been a bad month in the ZONE office. Humiliation and frustration came to stay and didn't even have the courtesy to clean up after themselves

★ **SORE LOSER** Dave Woods

People think it's fun reviewing games for a living, and I suppose it is most of the time.

Especially when you're beating the office at *Quake III* and getting sent across the pond to look at the latest interactive entertainment titles. But it's not all PR lunches and free beer. We also have to put up with month's like this...

It should have been soooo exciting, because on day one of the issue the world's first finished copy of *Daikatana* landed on my desk. You've probably read the review by now. If not, turn to page 62 and brace yourself for a big disappointment, or not as the case might be. You see *Daikatana* is a bit shit. Sorry, but it's the truth.

But as a professional games reviewer I can't just look at a game for ten minutes, say it's a bit shit and then launch into *Quake III*. Despite the fact that I know it's not going to get any better, or even improve enough to make the experience even slightly enjoyable, I've got to play it all the way through. And then go into multiplayer mode for a couple of days. And then kill myself. Which I nearly did after experiencing the thrills of *Daikatana*'s pit jump. If you're stupid enough to give John Romero your hard-earned cash then you'll find the pit towards the end of E1M4. It's a jump from hell inside an engine that was



Dave's ego, reputation and mental stability were all smashed to smithereens on his 437th fall.

never designed for pixel-perfect jumping, and rendered almost impossible by the fact that the world's greatest level designer has stuck a light in the way. Make the jump as you're supposed to and you hit your head on said light before plunging to a bloody death. Take it from a different angle and you can't reach the other side. The only way to do it is to run along the edge of the pit, and shuffle the split-second before you take off so that you're propelled diagonally. Fun? I've had a better time licking toilet floors.

Especially because the rest of the office seemed to find the whole thing absolutely hilarious. I eventually cracked

it after about 666 attempts, and an hour of being called crap and useless by Richie, Mark and Martin 'Butlins' Korda. The tossers. Chris was loving it as well, sitting next to me with that familiar smile on his face and the "you're crap at games aren't you?" line spurting out every two minutes (or five jumps, whichever came sooner).

But karma is a wonderful thing. Just after I cracked the jump Chris suddenly found himself in the middle of his own personal nightmare - *Soulbringer*. Five minutes into the game and he was getting slaughtered by quacking spiders. Trying desperately to attract our attention with cries of

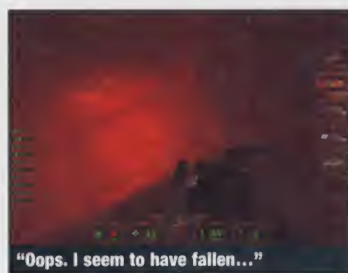
"Here's one. Stab it then. Am I hitting it? Oh for ****'s sake. Look I can't turn to face it. So I'm just going to die am I? Jesus Christ." This carried on for the rest of the day. There is a God.

And he turned up in our office to prove it. Yes, this month marked the return of the 'Ubergruppengibfraggmeister'. Or Macca, or just plain God for short. He didn't quite make it back in time for his son's official resurrection at Easter, but he took great delight in single-handedly dismantling us at *Quake III* anyway. And apparently he hadn't been practising "at all". Which is funny seeing as how, before he went to Dallas to cover the

"I nearly killed myself after experiencing the thrills of *Daikatana*'s pit jump. I've had a better time licking toilet floors"

Quake III championship (see his feature on page 36) both Mark and I were beating him. Macca doesn't like losing, and is forced into coming up with excuses such as, "I haven't played this map before." Despite the fact that we'd beaten him on the very same level the day before, and the day before that. And the day before that. Now this. A 20-3 thrashing followed by a 20-3 thrashing. Followed by, "Come on Dave. That's it you see. You can do it when you try."

Now we have to call him God and bend down in front of him. Or should that be bow down? Whatever. I'm off to practise killing with my railgun. After I've uninstalled *Daikatana*, of course. **PCZ**



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